

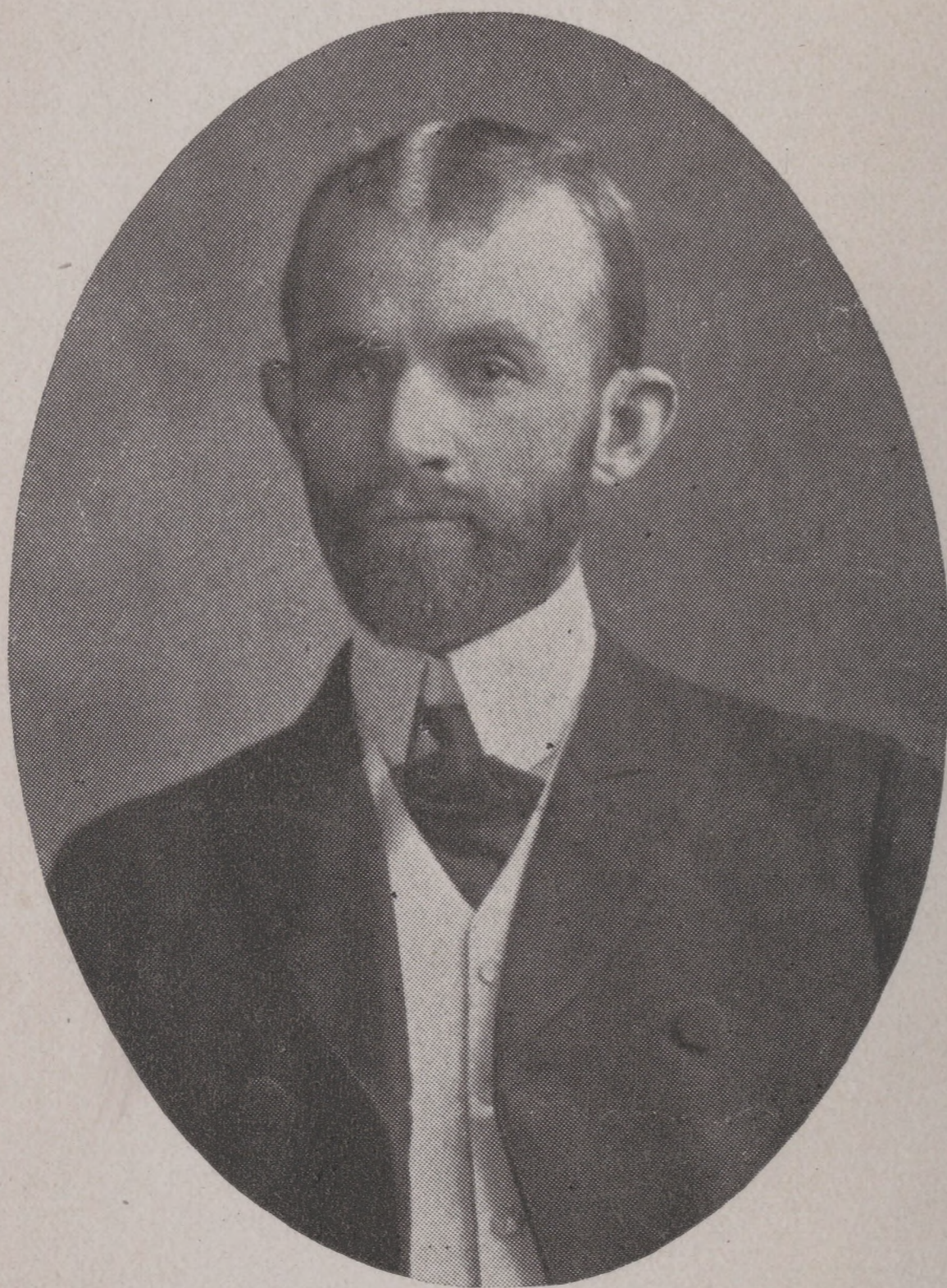


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W. THOMAS CARDEN

THE SQUASH FAMILY

Or a History of a Methodist Preacher
and His Family

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W. Thomas Carden.

BY

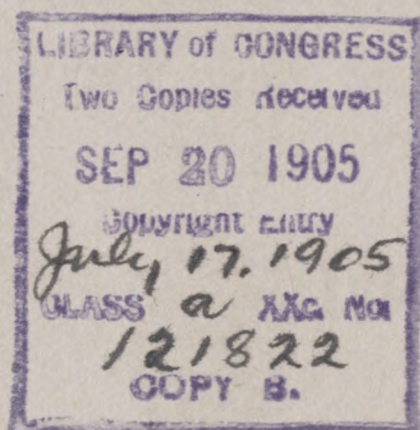
MAJOR TOM NOODLE

Author of "A Year With Uncle Jack," "The Untold Message
Revealed," "The Corpse and King Fallacy,"
and minor stories.

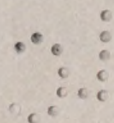


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W. THOMAS CARDEN
PULASKI, TENN.

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Dedication.

My best friend refusing the honor I herewith tender to my enemies my best wishes and I trust the perusal of this book will lessen their contumely and asperity.

This volume is therefore affectionately inscribed to
all who have aught against THE AUTHOR.

LEBANON, TENNESSEE
PRESS OF THE LEBANON DEMOCRAT
1905

Entre Nous.

“Once upon a time”—that is the usual way to begin a yarn—a small girl was quarreling with a diminutive masculine admirer. “We have a acre of watermelons, and, if you don’t hush and let me alone, you sha’n’t have any,” she said, offering a feminine mode of truce. “Thet’s nuthin’! I don’t want eny. One melon is an acher—when it’s green; I know,” said the youthful philosopher. So I feel that either reading or writing a preface is painful and I dispense with the undertaking by presenting a few remarks. I had rather given my readers a nuncupative blessing anyway. Books must be written to help keep the tree of knowledge flourishing and to relieve the drear monotony of existence. Nobody knows everything. There is much to be known. The knowledge of the wisest is limited. The human mind is finite. Actually there are a few things that I do not know. There are several things that I do not want to know. I know that I know what I do know. I know that I do not know what I do not know. Who knows what I know? There is no knowing. Who knows what I do not know? I do not know. I know that I did not know that I did not know anything until I knew that I did not know anything. Ah, my nose to know whether or no I have this right! I do not know whether I know that I knew I knew or whether I know that I knew I did not know that I did not know or whether I did not know that I did not

know or whether I did not know that I knew I did not know. I want to know.

Of this book you may know—by reading it. It records many real incidents. “The first sermon in town,” “The mountain wedding,” “Baptizing infants,” and many other experiences actually happened. It is a veritable ollapodrida.

This unpretentious work was written in twelve days, but it took about five years to compile the data.

I do not admit the full integrity of the history. Yet it is a counterpart of my experience and observation and coincides with the career and agrees with the life of others. Therefore it pictures scenes, amusing and pathetic, of a minister's family. I do not deny being a minister's son. I am proud of the fact. I appreciate this task of holding the curtains back to reveal the real people.

I am compelled to work with my head to keep above the tide, as I am physically unable to perform manual labor. Perhaps several excuses could (and should) be made for the imperfections of this volume. I prefer to promise to do better. An eleemosynary subject I once knew, while visiting at my grandfather's one day was questioned by him, in his usual charitable way, anent her condition. She answered in these words: “We air gittin' 'long very well, 'Square, I rec'on. Mr. Squint gave us some meat t'other day. But the most of it was fat and the most of it was lean. We eat the most of it and throwed the most of it away. Wouldn't mind a leetle of yore meat, howsumever.”

That's this preface. You may read it or not as you choose, but you will have to read it to know this. The idea also applies to the book.

I am a human—a white human. My mother was a woman—a good woman, the best one in the world, I think. I owe much to her that is good. The bad belongs to the human side.

So much for that. I trust I am doing my duty in the world. Are you? Respectfully,

MAJOR TOM NOODLE.

Pulaski, Tenn., July 10, 1905.

Menu Card.

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The Squash Family.

CHAPTER I.

Family History.

A family history must be chronicled, and fate has decreed that I essay the task because of my literary proclivities. I am aware that my reputation will be jeopardized; but I trust a forbearing public will be lenient toward me for attempting the imposed duty—and my reputation, being more presumptuous than stable, I pray, may survive the ordeal. Hence, I begin the herculean job, because I realize that family prestige deserves to live in history, and posterity will rise up and call me blessed for the monumental good I did the world—and our family. All the data at my command, out of which to construct a narrative, is what memory will afford me. And, as memories are not reliable—at least mine is not—there is apt to be egregious and palpable disconnections, omissions, and impartiality. Besides, I never knew all—and this is not intended to be an exhaustive work, except, perchance, it may exhaust the reader's patience, and, of course, that would not be intentional. Another item and I will launch out upon a hair-pulling trial of writing a biography, something I have never done, except when the subject was dead and not related to me. Biographies are generally written of very dead people, to revive "the great and glorious

lives'' in the minds and hearts of their countrymen and enemies.

(I will complete the usual prefatory essentials soon I hope, for I tire at such beginnings as this of anything of a literary color or character. But writing a family history, you know—no, you do not know, unless importunities, imprecations, and incessant demands and commands of kith and kin, and *family*—confound family history anyway; I wish that I had never had to write one—and *family pedigree*, compelled you—and, then, God pity you! Well, it is different when writing a *family*—history of the deeds and faults—no virtues—of a distinguished family, and the family is yours. You do not know my family or you would not blame me from shivering and shrinking from the piece of work, for everything must please everybody.)

I would prefer that this was a treatise on the history of the vegetable of the same name. It is simply a few sharps and flats in the career of, and family of, a minister who has eaten seven miles length of chicken necks—therefore a Methodist preacher, Rev. Isaac Squash, my honored sire. The history will deal principally of the members of our immediate family, so I will not say much about the other Squashes—but will confine myself to one variety. This history, also, will pertain mainly to my father's ministerial career, so I will not trouble about happenings prior to it, to any great extent, else I might get into trouble, and that is the very thing that I am trying to get out of.

Father was born and reared upon the distressing plane of poverty, which the uncivil strife between the

States entailed upon hitherto affluent denizens in some portions of the South. His father gauged young Isaac's energies into practical manual grooves, until the young man resolved to start life for himself at an early period. Although possessed of but a rudimentary knowledge of the elementary English branches, he secured and taught a school, and remained a pedagogue for some years on the reputation he established the first session of the Spunky school. He met a rosy-cheeked, country maiden, about this time, who was named Susanna Salt. Her father was wealthy. After much parental opposition young Squash won the heart and hand of his Salt girl, and they made a Gretna Green culmination of a somewhat romantic courtship—the courtship is another history, and confound another history or any history; I will not try to write it. Esquire Salt's wrath knew not latitude or longitude upon receipt of the news. Nothing would appease his anger, and he remained surly until the cold, icy hand of death touched some of the flowers that grew in the rosemary of his heart.

At this juncture it would not be amiss to describe my father's appearance. He was far from being handsome. (My uncomeliness is hereditary). One eye was higher than the other, and still remains that way, although he has always averred that it is a mistake people make: one eye is lower than the other. I hardly know which is correct. I suppose that it is a case of where both statements could be true when diametrically opposed. I know of a parallel case. A gentlemen ordered an Irish man servant to bring him a pair of riding boots from another room, and remarked that there were two pairs together and for

him to get mates. The Hibernian returned in a few moments with odd boots.

“These are not alike, don’t you see?” the man said, out of patience as he was in a hurry. “One has a longer top than the other!”

“You are right about it, bejabbers,” replied the Irishman, apologetically, “but, bedad, the other pair was the same way, too.”

To resume the description. My father’s complexion was sallow, a characteristic of the family and the vegetable. The hair was a sorrel color. The eyes were like unto those of a gander. He was a small man. He wore a cotton-rope-like, dingy mustache. All but his looks were passable. He was energetic, ambitious, progressive, fixed in habits, agreeable in manners, and very social. In his way he was very popular with everyone. His clothing hung loosely upon him, never fitting him. His attire, before and long after marriage, consisted of either a superfine hat or costly vest, jeans pants, a seersucker coat in summer and a cheap store coat in winter, a paper collar and a “shoo-fly,” with the “shoo-fly” bottomsides up the most of the time, and a pair of brogan shoes, blacked with soot from the bottom of one of his mother’s pots, mixed with the yolk of egg. And he rode an old sleepy, mouse-colored mule, named David—but the mule was not as sweet tempered as the prophet of olden days: he was of Spanish extraction and favored hostilities at all times.

Father gleaned about all he ever knew from experience and observation—two good teachers. Projects and failures of others taught him as an example, yet he was original and rarely imitative. He was a

tiller of the soil, honest and hopeful, yet negligent of the call to the ministry. He baffled for years against odds and difficulties, every undertaking proving a failure. His first-born, a daughter, died when a year and a half of age; also, the fourth child, a son, was ruthlessly snatched away by death when an infant.

My mother was of the ante bellum regime—a proud Southern woman of noble parentage. She was a person of good sense, pious deportment, and a strict lover of home. She considered her duty to be, to give her life to her husband and children. She did all of her domestic and household duties unassisted.

I, Joab Squash, am the oldest living child. I will desist in giving a detailed account of myself at the opening of this history—that word history again: I shall be deathly sick of it ere I use it the last time. Suffice it to say that I was about ten or eleven years of age when father began preaching and I possessed the Squash attributes of beauty; namely, white hair, pale blue eyes, and zanthic color, and bashfulness. I was bashful almost to the degree of greenness. Well, I was verdant and have not fully ripened until this good time. It was not exactly a greenish condition—but I did look green enough—but a result of force of circumstances and environments; ill health, ignorance of the ways of life and being untutored in its precepts and requirements.

There are six of the Squash children at present. The next one to me is Lycurgus—a reticent, demure, decorous, cunning, grave, deceitful boy. Physically he was a fine Squash—robust and olive cheeked.

The next Squash was a boy. His name is a peculiar one in general and somewhat singular in particular. By inadvertence on pater Squash's part and rank ignorance on filios Squash's part, the child was given the appropriate name of Ostrich, which as a matter of course with names became abbreviated to Os. I do not doubt the propriety of the designating title. He happened to secure the name in this manner: My parents were dilatory about giving the baby a name. No name suited their fancy—and every Squash must be suited in fancy. They became more and more negligent in regard to the matter and for no better name we fell into the pernicious habit folk sometimes do under like circumstances, and we called him "Babe" for twelve months. One day father decided to give him some name, any name, in fact, just so the boy had a name. He was preparing to leave home for a few days and was at the front gate when he made the final decision. He called to mother: "Susanna, I am going to name that child once for all. We will call him Oscar. Do you hear? That is as good a name as any. Joab, you write it in the Bible, in the family record."

I was a precocious lad and I had egotism until it stank. (I have long since learned—the more I knew I knew—that I did not know scarcely anything at that time, and have not learned much since.) I misunderstood the name. The last school that I had attended before my new brother's advent into this great, round world, I had learned to spell the word ostrich. What kind of animal, being or state of being, it was I had not the remotest idea. But it was high sounding to me and I was forever and anon

spelling the word. I understood the name for my brother to be my favorite word and I accordingly transcribed it under births in the Bible family record.

Father laughed good naturedly when he knew the mistake, and said: "Let it go, as the child swallows everything it can get into its mouth—buttons, tacks, marbles, corn, dirt, and leather—the name is suitable. If the name had remained Oscar it would have been shortened to Os, anyway. As it is, it will be Os, still."

Shakespeare has said what is there in a name, a rose would smell as sweet if it had another name. So after all, it is just the same, the baby would smell just as sweet named Ostrich as if it had been named Oscar.

The baby's most important feature was its voracity. He was forever and eternally eating. He even kept his mouth filled with his dirty, chubby fists when he could not get anything else. He was of a mild temperament and had a dominant grin spread over his face, and was quiet—this was an accommodation to the family of nights.

The next Squash was a girl upon whom was bestowed the affectionate appellation of Martha.

porch, and a shed room which was used to cook and eat in.

Reverses of fortune had placed Isaac Squash at the bottom of the ladder again—perhaps it was the hand of Providence inflicting punishment for his disobedience to the call to preach. He had begun anew, but for a year or so he could not make any progress, and he yielded to the call. The announcement passed from lip to lip that Ike Squash had turned preacher. There was much comment following it. Some was good; some bad; and some middling. A few were surprised. Some opposed. Some were encouraging.

Uncle Peter Squash, father's oldest brother, led the van of opposition, and appointed himself a committee of one to wait upon Ike and influence him to desist in the undertaking. Uncle Peter was an old widower. He was unlettered, erratic, stubborn, and biased. He was a member of the hardshell Baptist church—his choice. He could not be convinced against his will. Uncle Peter worked hard for his sustenance and objected to others living without laboring like he did. He had set views anent church polemics and politics, and ministers. Uncle Peter's objections only strengthened father's determination to preach. "Ike, shucks on gentlemen, (his favorite by-word) I tell ye, it is the biggest piece of nonsense I ever her'n tell of fer ye to be a bellerin' eround tryin' to preech. I'll be ashamed to own ye fer a brother, knowin' ye air goin' eround preechin' fer money. Thet's all a Methodist preecher does. Ye don't heve to do it. I kin help ye some ef ye air tired of hard work and air discouraged, so ye kin

git along. 'Tain't right and 'tain't Scriptur' to preech fer money. The Book says to nuther take to nur add from and not to fleec the flock. Shucks on, Ike, I'm sorry ye cackleated to do it. I allus thought ye had more sense thin thet."

"Peter, you know that I am not going to preach for money. I have heard all I care to hear from you on that subject. I intend doing my duty if I starve," said father.

"Well, I wouldn't preech without I wus paid fer it; but I wouldn't preech fer money. Bein' as ye air set erbout it and will not take my advice, I say God bless ye, but I do pity Susanna and the pore little uns. I hope the Lord'll pervide, but ye would be pervided fer much better ef ye would work fer it. But ye Methodists ain't Scriptur' nohow, and I've done my duty towards ye, so I leave the bizness with ye," said Uncle Peter, his nasal twang more pronounced than commonly.

At that time it was Methodist usage, that candidates for license to preach, were granted license by the quarterly conference, instead of the district conference as at the present time. Rev. I'm A. Granny was the presiding elder of our district at that time, and the night before the conference that authorized father to preach, convened, he spent at our humble home. We had never had so great a dignitary as guest and the whole family were flustrated. After diligently inquiring into the graces, virtues and qualifications of my father for the holy office, and catechising and admonishing the candidate for license, with a face as long as a sum in partial payments, the old maidish elder, who was a bachelor of uncertain age, expressed a

desire to retire. I had retired to the attic and had kept my eyes glued to a knot hole during the whole interview. I had a mortal dread of any man with a clerical garb and I was suspicious of every preacher. This was partially due to my having heard Uncle Peter's oft-time vent of opinion of Methodist clergymen, whom he said just went around and ate all the chickens and begged for "money! money! money fer this; money fer thet, and money fer everything." I was prejudiced because I was interested in poultry—and we rarely ate any chickens, but sold them to procure the ordinary necessities of life—and I thought preachers made people give them their money. I had seen them hold up several congregations. Besides, I thought a preacher was not as other men—he did not live, think or feel as other mortals. But, as I had already covertly examined the elder's traveling bag and great coat pockets, and found nothing apprehensive—there being no weapons in the bag and only a folio or two of sermons in manuscript and some toilet articles, and some small vials (the contents of some I sampled. I wish I had not, for one was extremely bitter)—my suspicions fled, and I concluded that it was reasonable to think that "the man of God" was human with blood and bones like other men instead of some foreign or celestial visitant. My good mother was considerably distressed about entertaining the godly man. She had borrowed some sugar to go in his coffee. We had always sweetened our coffee with molasses. I borrowed some of the sugar, and Kurg saw me. I had to give him the Barlow knife Uncle Peter had presented me, to keep him from telling on me. The blade of the knife was broken, and the back

spring was loose, and one side of the handle was off, but it was one of my treasures, because Uncle Peter and I were great cronies, and because I could cut my name on the school desks like the large boys, and I had cut off a cat's tail and cropped his ears with it just like father did some hogs. I had rather give the knife to Kurg to keep him from divulging the theft than to be told on, for I knew that that meant some broad guaged palmistry on sensitive parts, and, besides, I could euchre Kurg out of the knife in a day or two. Well, my mother put the best fare possible before the elder. She was a splendid cook and the savory victuals he evidently relished, for I got very tired waiting for him to finish eating. I was behind the door, looking at him through a crack. He sure did like chicken. The best arrangements that could be made for sleeping was to put the elder in the attic on a spare bed. If I could have escaped from the attic I would have made my exit hurriedly. But I could not—he was upon the ladder already. Father was holding the brass lamp while the elder carefully clumb the ladder, and he was not a good climber either. Father then handed the elder the lamp—the only one we had, and the rest of the family were in total darkness. I covered up my head but left a peep hole, for I always liked to see what was going on around me. I was sleeping on a trundle bed. I would not have slept with that preacher that night for a world of money. It took the elder a whet to get to bed. He looked like a woman dressed in white, but his long, flowing beard made him look like nothing I had ever heard of. I decided that it was his ministerial robe and I wondered if father

would have to wear such a tunic when he became a preacher. I begun to wish that father had listened to Uncle Peter's counsel.

The elder called to father to bring him a glass of water to put his false teeth in, and to get the lamp as he was abed. They were the first artificial teeth I had ever seen and I was like the negro porter at the hotel, when a man with a glass eye, lodged there one night. The negro escorted the guest to his room, and the man wishing to change eyes, took one from his pocket and held his hand over his good eye while he took out the glass eye.

"Here," he said to the colored man, "get me a glass of water."

The darkey did so. The man put the eyes in it.

"Now, unscrew my head and set it upon the table until morning."

The negro fled precipitatedly.

I calmed my fears eventually and slept soundly.

The next day Isaac Squash was duly licensed to preach. In a few weeks he made his debut at his home church, and it met with a cordial reception. The most of the congregation that heard his maiden effort were relatives and friends. Soon he began to preach at every opportunity. He had appointments at various country churches, cross roads school houses and people's homes near Squashville before many moons had waned. At these rural places, where no polished sermons or cultured preachers had ever been heard or seen the young preacher had remarkable success. He accomplished much good by doing what his hands could find to do.

The pastor of the charge soon learned of the new

licentiate's work and success and assigned him regular duties. Rev. Squash was a vocalist and revivalist, and the experience attended with so much praise and success, soon caused him to wish to "let his eagle soar from higher heights." He was almost beside himself with joy when the preacher in charge extended him an invitation to assist him in a revival in a town by the name of Crookedville.

CHAPTER III.

The First Sermon in Town.

Rev. Squash received so much praise from his hearers that he became conceited in a measure and he felt that he deserved promotion to better preaching places. He had actually had better success in the backwood places than the regular preacher. A spirit of vanity rose in his breast to wish to pose before the more refined and intelligent congregations of the circuit and see if they would be as favorably impressed with him—he might be able to win laurels over the pastor even in town. The preacher in charge evidently noted that feeling in the young preacher and saw that he needed to be taught a lesson in humility. The invitation to preach at Crookedville was to help in a protracted meeting in August. There was an organ in the church and the people had town manners. Father longed to take part in just such a meeting and in this one he contemplated the victory which he felt would undoubtedly be his. He was to ride to the parsonage, a few miles distance from home, on Sunday, and go with the pastor to Crookedville. He prepared some notes on St. John 11:35 and jotted them down in a Dr. Pierce's memorandum book. A weeping Savior would be held before the people of Crookedville in such a eloquent and irresistibly pathetic way that they would be electrified. The information that the text was the shortest verse in the Bible would be imparted unto them and the fact would secure their attention at once. The long-look-

ed-for day at last dawned—a bright, balmy morning. As he was to appear in town father primped. He borrowed a new suit of clothes from one of his single brothers, shaved clean, and supplemented his toilet with every other needed article he could command. He was in perfect health, and looked ten years younger than he was. No time was lost in reaching the parsonage. The pastor was waiting for him and they started for the town. As they neared their destination the preacher asked father if he felt like preaching the opening sermon.

“I would as soon as not,” was the reply.

“Then if you feel ready you may have the opportunity, but you may wait until night if you choose,” said his companion. About this time they came within sight of the church. So many vehicles and horses were hitched on the grounds that when the preachers were hitching their steeds, father said:

“Brother, I believe that I will wait until night to preach. I can do better at night.”

“Very well,” agreed the pastor.

There was an immense crowd present. The music was grand and entrancing. The sermon was able and well received. The preacher preached better than he ever had, father thought. Father began to have misgivings about excelling him, but his mind flew to his text and the notes and he felt reassured. He hoped that as large a congregation would be present at night.

At the close of the service the pastor announced that he had come to hold a week’s meeting and that young brother Squash was with him, and he under-

stood that he was an excellent preacher, and would preach for them that night.

Immediately after the benediction a bevy of young ladies presented themselves to be introduced to the preacher. Although not over twenty miles from home he was a rank stranger at that place. One young lady sweetly invited the preachers to go home with her for dinner, remarking that her mother had remained at home that day to prepare dinner purposely for them. The invitation was accepted.

The young lady winked at her small brother to take the preacher's horse—it was a mule—and graciously offered to show him the way to her father's home. Father gallantly escorted her across the town to her home and was ushered into the parlor. The other preacher came with the girl's father. Dinner was served presently. Rev. Squash met the old folks, who by the way thought he was a young man and that their daughter had caught a beau. After dinner the young lady invited him back into the parlor. The pastor, preacher-like, after a good dinner, asked for a room, and went up stairs to take a nap. And the young lady's parents would not intrude their presence on their daughter's company. Father thought this a little romantic, but he had anticipated something new in town and quietly submitted to the situation and proceeded to converse with the girl the best he could. She was a little inclined to talk about sweethearts, and asked him to write in her autograph album, which he did. But he gave her a good religious talk, and found that she was an active member of the church. It was strange to him why her parents did not seem to wish to cultivate

the acquaintance of the young preacher, when the young lady was so very friendly—but it never dawned upon him that the whole family were laboring under a mistake as to his being a married man; so he was cooped all that sultry afternoon in a parlor with a young lady who was doing her level best to captivate him.

Just before sunset the young preacher began to think of having to preach that night and an uneasiness of spirit possessed him. He excused himself to take a walk to meditate and ponder on things of a heavenly nature. The young lady seemed glad to excuse him, for she had exhausted her resources to angle him. He walked to the outskirts of town and found his way to the cemetery and sat down upon a slab board and took a long look at his notes on the lachrymal exercise of the Savior. While ruminating the supper bell rang and he hastily returned to the house. Consternation was on all sides. The pastor was convulsed with laughter over some risible happening. The old folks were overwhelming with apologies for not having been more genial and communicative. The young lady was so chagrined over her mistake that she was in her room weeping and refusing to be pacified. The small brother was hugely enjoying the whole affair. In the interim of the young preacher's absence the young lady had stepped across the street to the home of a neighbor, and was bragging what an impression she had made on the young Timothy, when it was revealed to her that he was a married man, with a wife and four children.

At the supper table, she was sent for and father told her when she came into the dining room that

the easiest way out of the mistake was to humor the joke and that, if he was a married man, he was chivalric enough to take care of young ladies and entertain them, and he proposed to go with her to church if she pleased, to which she assented. When they arrived at the church they were early, so the young preacher left the young lady, and told the pastor to go in and sing awhile, that he wanted to stroll awhile and pray and meditate.

“Do not be gone long, brother,” commanded the older minister.

The young preacher started off down the pleasant street at a 2:40 gait. The full-orbed moon was just rising, the air was exhilarating, and he soon became oblivious to his surroundings. The street he was on merged into a highway. He walked on, knowing not how fast or how far he was walking. He was in deep thought. Now and then he would meet a crowd on their way to church, but after awhile he ceased to meet any one. Suddenly he came to himself at the sight of a friendly signboard on the side of the road. He approached it, wondering if he had walked a mile. It plainly and truthfully read: “To Crookedville two miles.” He looked at his time piece. It was the preaching hour. Two miles away, on foot, and time up! He took his hat in his hand and struck a dog trot for the church. Never did two miles seem so long! He begun to think he had gotten on the wrong road. He finally got to the church, and went in panting like a lizard and wet with perspiration. The church was crowded. The pastor had concluded that the young preacher had taken stage fright and fled, and he was sitting in the pulpit, with his spec-

tacles on the end of his nose, looking for a text when father entered. He looked up with a frown and told father to get up and go right to preaching.

Father crawled up into the old-fashioned pulpit and went through all the preliminaries of opening service, as though nothing had been done. He selected a very long hymn, sang every stanza alone, prayed a long prayer, read a couple of long lessons, and sang another long hymn. The old preacher was still frowning. The congregation was impatient. He turned to his text in the large pulpit Bible and deliberately announced it, and then surveyed his crowd and announced it again—and paused. All he could get Jesus to do was to weep—verily he was holding before the people a weeping Savior! He thought of his precious notes, and began to fumble first in one and then another pocket for them. At last he got a book from one pocket and opened it and slipped it into that large Bible, but when he looked to read it, it did not read right. The congregation was in suspense. He concluded to go on anyway. He pushed up his sleeves and hit the Bible hard and said, “Jesus wept!” almost at the top of his voice; but that was about all he could say. He finally loosened the cushion upon which the Bible rested and no matter how hard he tried he never could get it to fit its place again. He began to tremble, and, holding the Bible with both hands to keep it from sliding off, he apologized to the crowd for disappointing them and asked a little upstart Presbyterian preacher who sat in the pulpit behind him and who had been saying, “Amen” rather loudly, to conclude. This little preacher jumped up and began to halloo, “Jesus wept!” He was a

college ecclesiastical product; who used a great deal of elocutionary intonation and gesticulation. Rising upon tiptoe, he made a circling sweep with his hand and knocked a large lamp shade from the chandelier which hung over his head. He caught at it wildly but it smashed into smithereens at his feet. He stood and looked at it a moment, then sat down—in father's lap. Both of the little preachers were considerably mortified. Our hero pushed the other little preacher out of his lap, and sat with his head down, covering his face with his hands.

The pastor arose and presently had the attention of the laughing audience. He told them the boys might be intimidated by the crowd, but he was not, and he proceeded to give an earnest exhortation. As he advanced he caught an inspiration from the text and his soul was kindled until his face shone with a heavenly halo. The almost disorganized throng were transformed into an eagerly listening, weeping congregation. Mourners were called and several responded. The old preacher went to where the two crestfallen beginners sat and told them to go into the altar and instruct the penitents.

Squash said, "I can't." The other little preacher groaned. The old man told them again to work in the altar and not to give up in such a way and they crawled out of the pulpit into the altar and looked more like mourners than preachers. Shortly one of the penitents requested a certain song sung and the pastor asked Rev. Squash to sing it. Father, in a trembling voice, sang, "No Night in Heaven," and the mourner, a beautiful young lady, professed religion while he was singing.

After service the pastor and his protege repaired to their room. The old man lay down on the carpet and rolled and laughed until he cried. The young man was compelled to look on and grin.

“That is the best thing that could have happened. I have noticed you had the swell head. But I feel confident now that you will be more humble,” said the pastor, fatherly.

“I am out of my latitude I feel, and I am going home to-morrow,” said father.

The old man rolled again, and said: “No; you must stay and sing for me. I will not put you up to preach for awhile yet.”

Rev. Squash spent the most of the night in prayer and sackcloth and ashes. As a leader was needed in the song part of the service, he concluded to stay. In this capacity he made favorable impressions, but some wanted him to try to preach again. At last he consented and acquitted himself quite well. Instead of taking a single verse—and that the shortest one in the Bible—he took a whole chapter for a text.

The meeting continued throughout the week and, when the pastor had to leave, the people importuned the young preacher to remain for several days, which he did, being very successful in his singing and preaching.

draw the application of Rev. Squash before it was rejected, and told Rev. Squash that the committee would not pass him, but that he would see that he got work as a supply.

Rev. Squash remained at the conference until it closed. When the appointments were read out among the list was, "Starvation Circuit, supplied by Isaac Squash."

Starvation Circuit was a very large circuit in a mountainous and sedge-grass section of country about seventy-five miles from Squashville. It had nine appointments, and was an old, run-down charge, with several defunct churches—a place where many a young and hopeful itinerant and worn-out circuit rider had been put to the test. A conference generally puts the young bloods on some difficult, unimportant work for the first year or so, and, if they prove "faithful over a few things", advances them as they deserve. There was an ordinarily good parsonage on the work. The supply preacher was handed a plan of the charge by his predecessor, when the conference adjourned, which proved very helpful to him. The circuit was in the farthest end of the Shoe String District. Rev. Gid Pully, L. P.; John Grumbleton, R. S.; U. S. Mossback, St. and I. B. A. Gump, exhorter, were some of the officials I remember. The churches were: Mt. Despair (the main church), Calvary (a worse place than where the Lord was crucified), Knoll of Hardtimes, Mt. Skull, Joppa, Mt. Moriah (it should have been called Black Maria), Deadgo, Hollow Chapel, and a village named Juicer.

Upon his return home the preacher had good news

to tell his family and friends—or rather he had an excuse to keep from telling of his defeat. He wisely concluded to do like Joshua of olden days, spy out the land—he would go to his work and see the place before removing his family thither. He hastily arranged his worldly affairs—and I can state with no feigned veracity that it did not take long to do that—he did not own anything but a wife and four children, a mule, a dog, a cow and calf, and some debts and household effects. And like his Lord he rode not an ass but an ass's son, old David! (We gave every mule we ever owned the name of David).

He started for his work with only twenty cents in his purse, and was rather shabbily dressed. In obedience to him who said, "Take no thought for your life, and "take no purse nor scrip," he rode on, hoping, trusting, praying.

He spent the first night with a hospitable farmer, who extended every welcome he could to "the stranger within his gate"—actually favoring him after supper with an argument on baptism. Father had thought that he was in a Methodist home and it was a Campbellite roof he was under. After patiently listening to the man's views, father stated that he did not care to argue their differences, but that he would like to read a chapter and have prayers. The gentleman granted the wish and the argument was cut short and was not renewed during the remainder of the visit.

After dire hardships and fatigue the third day found the supply within the bounds of his supply—Starvation Circuit. The new preacher began visiting and inquiring into the existing condition of the vari-

ous churches. At some of them there were no prayer meetings, no Sunday schools, and not a member that would lead in prayer, and "brother was in law with brother," and some should have been in jail. There was no interest. Run down aristocracy predominated at one or two places. Reports had preceded Rev. Squash that the new preacher was a supply, rode a mule, and was unprepossessing in many respects. Some of the people thought that the "powers that be" had mistreated them and they were condemning the preacher before they had seen him, and vowing that they would not contribute to his support. Unconscious of these usual demonstrations on the part of those who are "straining gnats" for excuses, the preacher proceeded, visiting and praying at every home. He saw that some were inclined to snub him, but others were friendly and took him into their hearts immediately. He preached at some of his churches and was kindly received, but at one church his sermon was severely criticised. Another church, seeing his seedy appearance, purchased a new suit of clothes for him — the finest clothes he had ever owned.

After this brief survey of the land, Rev. Squash returned home, to remove his family. Loading the plunder and children in wagons, the journey began. There was "weeping and wailing" on both sides at the leave-taking. Uncle Peter expostulated, remonstrated, and expatiated, then smuggled a few briny tears. I howled to remain with him, for I did not want to go away off and starve like Uncle Peter said we would. All the young shoots blubbered through ignorance and sympathy. Best wishes and prayers of

loved ones were ours. Some of my uncles went with us to bring the wagons back.

It was autumn. The weather was ideal, and we camped out the first night. Some of the men slept under the wagons on leaves and some slept in the wagons. Kurg and myself were cuddled in front of a wagon bed with a sewing machine foot-plate for a pillow. A heavy frost fell during the night, and I awoke, from a fearful dream, nearly frozen. In my nightmare I had ridden my head into the running gear of the machine and was fastened. In my efforts to extricate myself I got on Kurg's territory and tranquility (that is what father called it, but I thought my feet were in the region of his stomach) and he began to pommel me with his double fists. I kicked in defence and he bit and scratched in offence—then, when blood was spilled, midnight squalls smote the stillness, which alarmed the company and relieved the afflicted and bellicose youngsters. Our destination was reached in due time.

The parsonage was in the country and was surrounded by a wood. When the house was seen, Os sighted a turnip patch in the garden, and before the wagons stopped, he, Kurg, and myself were scaling the palings and were in the turnips (and the turnips going into us). I believe that if older and wiser heads had not intervened we would have pulled every turnip, but we would not have eaten them all, for the patch was of good size. Of course the regular penalties—maternal and hygienic—were inflicted. Chastisement franchise was controlled and operated exclusively by my mother, who must have had a finished early training, for she certainly understood

how to administer an effective trouncing. We children often availed ourselves of the presence of company to exercise forbidden rights, but we slyly studied her face for frowns and signs of danger, careful not to let her know that we saw them.

So we were preacher's folk and at our new home—ready to meet the criticism, disappointments, and demands of the people—and to live or die at least one year on the Starvation Circuit.

CHAPTER V.

The First Year.

The first year is the hardest year of the Methodist itinerancy. It is a time of trial and hardship in the fullest sense. The preacher is inexperienced and unacquainted with the duties and responsibilities devolving upon his shoulders. He does not know how to adapt himself. It is generally a misfit, but one year is liable to knock off the rough edges enough for him to know the when, how and why, and where of most of the phases of the work. It is a station hard to fill. The demands are varied. Many delicate and difficult circumstances arise. Perplexing and embarrassing ordeals must often be confronted. The expectations are great. The position is unique. To successfully comply with and meet the exigencies of the hour, even in a measured degree, requires a man of talents and resources. He must be qualified to cope with the most sad and trying problems of life. The doctrines of his church must be defended and promulgated. The message must be delivered. The fire on the altar must be kept burning. The sick must be ministered unto; the dead buried; the young married; the negligent awakened; the weak encouraged; the recalcitrant reprimanded, and sinners warned. The women must be complimented, the men toadied, and the children petted. Friction must be overcome; obstacles removed; troubles adjusted, and the machinery kept in repairs. Wolves must be destroyed; the goats separated, and the flock—

sheared. Beside, private and secular affairs must be attended to.

The raw recruit, no matter how hopeful, zealous or confident he may be, soon becomes cognizant of the enormous amount of work and his inability to perform it. He is often bewildered and dismayed. He will make mistakes. He cannot please everyone.

He needs to be patient, discreet, and diplomatic. He must use judgment and be reasonable. The pastor of Starvation Circuit was enthusiastic and began at once "to drag the wheels of Zion from the mire." Work was plentiful. He had not yet gotten around. One Sunday afternoon, shortly after his arrival, he started for his three o'clock appointment—Mt. Skull—which was six miles from where he had preached in the forenoon. It was in the remotest corner of the circuit, in an almost inaccessible district. Paths and cross roads bisected and diverged the route at all points. The preacher took the wrong road and rode on, unknowingly of the mistake. He was sure that he had ridden more than six miles already, and the Indian summer's sun was bending low, yet no church in sight—nothing but an apparently interminable wilderness. In a few moments the road turned and near the ascent of a hill he beheld a beautiful white country church, with an immense number of horses and vehicles hitched on the grounds. "A large crowd is out to see and hear their new preacher," mentally commented the preacher. Singing was heard. Men were around the doors in groups. It was past the preaching hour, so the circuit rider hurriedly hitched old David, shook hands with a few of the men at the door, and entered the church. All

on the outside followed him. The house was packed. Father nodded right and left familiarly and stepped into the pulpit, knelt and prayed. When he arose the singing had hushed. He at once began the services and preached a powerful Methodist sermon—such a large congregation deserved it. Before he finished there seemed to be a mysterious influence at work in the amen and awomen corners. The preacher thought it strange that the nods and shakes of heads and apparent disapproval of the sermon could be objections. They were different Methodists from any he had ever known if that was true. He was puzzled, but thought, perhaps, it was something else causing the dissatisfaction, and he would act as if he had not perceived any disturbance. Before he dismissed the audience he thanked them for their presence and attention and hoped to have a pleasant year with them. He spoke of the appointment being made by those to whom such power was intrusted and he trusted that they could accept such a preacher as himself, and he would be back at the regular time.

At this juncture a florid-faced gentleman arose and said: “Hold on, brother; I don’t know about that. There is some mistake.”

“I am your new preacher, and I am going to preach here once a month,” interposed the preacher.

“We haven’t any new preacher, so I don’t know about it,” replied the man.

“Haven’t you seen the list of appointments?” asked Rev. Squash.

“No. Who are you, anyway?”

“I am Isaac Squash, the preacher the Jerusalem conference sent you this year.”

“Didn’t you know that this was a Baptist church?”

“No! I thought that we had a Methodist building at this place and did not know that we had to borrow the Baptist church.”

The audience was greatly amused by this time. They saw through the error, but Rev. Squash had not.

“This is a Baptist crowd, Brother Squash, and—

“What!” ejaculated the dumbfounded preacher.

“A ludicrous mistake has been made. Our pastor is sick and he sent word that he would send us a new man in his place today. We had about given him out when you came. I suppose that you are the new circuit rider for the Mt. Skull church. It is a few miles from here.”

“Yes; I see the mistake on both sides. I appreciate being with you just the same. Baptist water and Methodist fire make good steam,” said the circuit rider.

“We enjoyed the most of your sermon and would be glad to have you with us again, sometime,” said the Baptist.

In his callow ministerial days Rev. Squash was not much of a preacher. He knew it. He told the people that he was not boasting of it, but that they had the ugliest preacher that they had ever had, and he could not preach much, but he was going to try to be the best preacher in the State and for them to try to be the best church. In preaching father was kind of like a visitor my great grandmother had once. She had much company that day and at dinner, as the sweet milk was scarce she employed the means some modern dairymen use to increase their supply—she watered it. This particular guest passed

and repassed his goblet for milk several times. He was about to consume all of the mixture, and, at last, seeing the old lady's embarrassment, he apologized in these words: "My dear Mrs. Squash, you will please pardon me for having passed my goblet so many times for milk; but the truth is, I am dearly fond of sweet milk—I had to drink a heap of water to get a little milk."

Father loved preaching above all things, but as he could not preach much, he had to do much church work, to keep up. He revived the old plan of house to house visitation—and actually went to see every family within the radius of his circuit, and sang and prayed with all who would permit him. At some homes during prayers the children and cats and dogs would fight, and sometimes mischievous tots would hit him in the back and pull his hair, but nothing deterred him in the work. During the year revival flames swept the circuit. Sinners were converted and the churches edified. At Joppa, which was the worst place on the circuit, the pastor began the revival with a church conference. As the roll was called he made a searching inquiry into the spiritual status of each member. "Are you enjoying religion?" "Are you doing your duty?" "Do you pray?" "Do you live peaceably with all men so much as lieth in your power?" and such questions were asked of those present. If they replied in the negative—and most of them did—he asked what was the trouble and if they wanted to get right. Out of a large membership there were but a few old women and children and old men consistent members. Some of the members confessed their shortcomings and long-goings and

promised to regain their first love, and came to the altar to be prayed for.

The preacher went to see every member and propounded them like questions. The church conference lasted a week. Every case was handled. "The temple was purged"—and it almost "rent it in twain" also. Vileness and corruption were unearthed on all hands. Many were expelled or withdrew. Quite a number were reclaimed, and much good resulted. The sanctuary was purified and "strange fires" and "unclean sacrifices and oblations" were no longer offered the Lord God Almighty. With the disturbing elements eliminated or quelled, the church was ready to save souls. The whole community was awakened and the congregations grew until the house would not contain them. The effort redounded in many sinners "fleeing from the wrath to come" and the Lord's name being greatly magnified. Rev. Squash had not been ordained and he could not string the fish he had caught, and he must wait until he could get an ordained preacher to come and receive and baptize the converts. Before this could be done a Baptist preacher—the pastor of the church father had preached in through error—came along and held a meeting in the neighborhood and got twenty-four of the twenty-five converts into his church. This was due to a deficiency in Methodist law in regard to ordination.

CHAPTER VI.

Causes and Sequences.

Some of the Methodist customs and rites I never have been particularly fond of. I suppose I was early prejudiced—and “first impressions remain longest.” Fast day is one—I never did like it. Friday before each quarterly conference each member is supposed and required to “abstain from the very appearance” of breakfast—and the rest of the meals of the day if he can, but he generally takes a late breakfast and a hearty dinner. Before I belonged to a preacher’s family, I was either too young or we did not observe the practice for me to be accustomed to it. Our first fast day that I remember, Kurg and I had to go to mill. I was not a member of the church but I had to fast—because there was nothing cooked that morning. I had some idea of the meaning of the word fast, even if it was not in my vocabulary, so I instructed Kurg to put a turnip in his pocket. He got a turnip too large for his pocket and he put it in—in—his clothes. We had to wait for our “turn” and dinner time came. We were nearly famishing with hunger. We ate the turnip—but I was generous with my smaller brother, and gave him the largest half for once—as I had “late impressions” of that insipid, pain-producing vegetable. However before we secured our grinding I renounced all qualms and ate raw corn. While waiting, to divert the gnawing pains of starvation, I began a tour of exploration

around and near to the mill. Near the patient, steady, lazy old water mill I found a hog pen with a plank bottom and sides—that kind of pen I had never seen. The miller was fattening a bunch of hogs of different sizes. A water pipe led to the feeding trough. In scrutinizing the pen I saw the pipe and wondered what it was for. Knowledge is a means to enlarge pleasures and it is equivalent to force, and curiosity is the base of desire, and the unknown leads us. I do not know which reason prompted me to examine the stop-cock on the pipe. But I know that I found that it would turn. I also know that the water madly spurted therefrom, drenching me and scaring me very badly. (I thought that I had broken it).

I further know that I could not stop it. (I was sure that I had broken it.)

I had to dry my clothing to escape detection, so I lay in the sunshine above the pen and watched the water run and the pretty hogs quench their thirst. I had done a good deed. The swine were soon satisfied—but the stream still flowed and the pen had enough water in it to slake their thirst the rest of their lives. Presently I grew alarmed. I thought of going and telling the miller or some one. Conscience and I had a wrangling debate over the matter. I decided that that was not the proper course—but something had to be done. I tried to stop it again, but failed. Then I watched it run. The more I watched the more I was interested —and the more the water ran and the deeper the pen filled. The situation became amusing. I began speculating as to the outcome of the catastrophe—to the hogs. Some of the smaller ones were

almost swimming and some were trying to get out of the pen. I wondered if they would escape. The water flowed steadily on. Now, the hogs were swimming. Hulla gee! I wondered how long they could swim or whether they could swim over the top of the pen. I was not hungry any longer. I would get my grinding and go home before some one passed that way. I went to the mill—but the miller said that I would have to wait a little longer. O, for home! What a slow mill! Look! The miller is going toward the deluged hog pen. Still waiting!

“Here, son, is your turn,” said a mill hand. “Come again.”

Kurg and I left for home.

The miller had not returned to the mill—I suppose the hog pen was occupying his attention.

According to my logic, if I had not been compelled to fast, I would probably never have gotten into that trouble. I never heard more of it—and that was exactly what I wanted—but I spent long, anxious hours, expecting any moment a summon to account, and in preparing my defence—and I detest fasting and going to mill even until this day.

In the spring there was empty pantry and hungry mouths at the parsonage, and Rev. Squash publicly said at several churches that he would appreciate payment on his salary and was willing to take anything, for he needed everything, even vegetables or provisions. We had been subsisting on turnips for some time, but the ruta bagas were gone. Verily, starvation in earnest stared us in the face! Father did not come home on Monday from his Sunday appointment. Early in the morning a man brought us a sackful of

turnips. Later in the day a man brought a cart-load of —turnips. In the afternoon a steward brought a wagon load of “quarterage”—mostly turnips. The whole circuit liberally responded to the preacher’s appeal—in turnips, and scarcely a day passed that it did not bring more turnips. There had been a prolific crop the fall before and everybody had turnips. We had more than we knew what to do with. The cellar was running over. Since that time I have never liked turnips. In the late spring the turnips sprouted and nearly turned the house over. We put all we wanted in the garden for salad and threw the rest away. Turnips were everywhere and they became so common that there was not anybody or anything on the place that would eat them. And then salad! I had always liked salad, but after eating it continually for days, weeks and months I revolted. Turnip tops with a “plow-point”—hog’s jowl—makes an appetizing dish, some people say, but I will do without an appetite before I resort to such a diet. I believe it is just an excuse they make—that is about all that they have to eat and they say that it is good, to get you to eat it and not think anything. I am not graminivorous any more.

The conference course was faithfully studied this year and when the annual session convened, Rev. Squash passed the examination and was admitted on trial into the Jerusalem conference. He had a splendid report to make—and we had not starved. He was appointed to Successful Mission for the ensuing year.

CHAPTER VII.

The Squashes in General.

Successful Mission was a new work, composed of a few old churches and some undeveloped territory, situated on top of the mountain and in contiguous communities. It was about a dozen miles from where we were. There was no parsonage on the new work and father's successor was a newly married man, so arrangements were made for us to remain at the parsonage and them to live with us, as the preacher's wife was an invalid.

There are characteristics, peculiar to the Squash family, which make them unlike any other. A Squash can tell a Squash when he first sees him—just like the tramps understand each other. He is a fun-loving creature, free-hearted, with an Irish heart and Scotch intellect. He is a staunch friend and an unrelenting foe, yet he will be hard to be made offended. A remarkable trait—I never heard of one being rich. And you have to give him the lead. He does not like to follow. He cannot bear restraint and hence he cannot tolerate etiquette, although he is not ill-mannered to an alarming extent, as he can be “commensurate to the occasion” always if he desires. At the table, at the home of a Squash a stranger would be nonplussed. A tramp's lingo is used and meal time is hilarious. “Pass the chalk and erasers”, means cream and sugar for the coffee. “Fighting” means eating. “I want some Ned” is “help my plate to bacon” and is invariably seconded with a

“me too” from several young Squashes. Then, silent signs will be made for many articles, the Squash making the signal never interpreting it. If not understood, he will say, “I’ll die before I ask for it,” or “you know what I need.” Some member of the family will generally see what is wanted. If no one sees or heeds the sign, the Squash making it will quit eating and wait a moment. Still, if the others are too busy to attend to his wants or fail to recognize the insinuation, he will say to the one nearest the one who should be mindful of what is needed, “strike him between the eyes with your fist” or “tap him on the head with your knife,” or else will throw a biscuit at him. “I love milk,” “I do like bread,” or any other article of food, means that the named articles are wished. “Shove the butter down,” “slide the Ned this way,” “push me anything,” “throw me a couple”—biscuits of course. These are some of the many table phrases. A dignified presiding elder once perched at our table was broken of his city formality—at least when he was at our house. He very quietly sat at the table, seeming to be waiting for servants or some one to attend to his wants. We never helped anyone at the table unless he asked it. A meal was prefaced this wise: “Here we are! Help yourself. Here is where we make our living.” And every Indian proceeded to put to and lay by as their several tastes dictated. The elder—his name was Jim Fisty—still waited. We all noticed his actions, and had become tired of his coldness and forced manners before supper, so we began. Father said, “Brother Fisty, take a spcon,” passing him a dozen. The elder could see no use for a spoon at that time and he

declined with thanks. "Will you take some salt?" He had no use for salt, and he savagely said, "No!" "Pepper?" The elder was gritting his teeth. "Vinegar?" The elder's eyes were twinkling by this time and he relaxed his austerity. "Take a banana, and here are some copper cents," said father passing a plate of baked yam potatoes and a dish of eggs—and eggs were selling for a cent apiece. The elder laughed outright and from then on was genial and frank, as all presiding elders should be. He said that he never enjoyed a meal more, but at first he felt like Lazarus—licked by the dogs.

We lived in the country, inconvenient to church, school, water and wood, and neighbors. The second year was harder than the first to all of us. Some of us were sick. The invalid grew worse and died within a few months after coming. The mission was not a successful paying charge, and the other preacher, now being unincumbered, was not paid scarcely anything. An appropriation of one hundred and seventy-five dollars supplemented the salary for the mission—and that was about all. I remember that the bosom of my pants often was worn open and father had to quit praying on his knees so much and mother stayed at home so much that she got in the habit of staying and she cannot be budged out of the yard hardly since—and if the garden had not been a good one and the blackberry crop full we would have fared badly. Yet the Squashes of Squashville all thought that we were in affluence because we were preacher's folk. They did not know how the housewife had to stint and economize nor the faithful preacher untiringly face the extreme difficulties of his pastorate.

At some points on the mountain where he labored many grown people had never seen a Methodist preacher. The people were poor and illiterate in the main. They hunted and fished on Sunday and made illicit beverages through the week in many places.

CHAPTER VIII.

Death and Accidents.

One cold December morning Kurg imparted the sad intelligence that Mage, a mangy, red, yearling, had died the night before—with “blind tigers,” he said. The unfortunate brute was stark and cold in the grim monster’s embrace, sure enough, we found on going to the lot near the house. I suppose his demise was due to heart palpitation—as that complaint runs in the family. Uncle Peter says that I will be subject to it when I get older. Father bade Kurg and myself to skin the animal and attend to the obsequies. Os followed us. We did not know the *modus operandi* of removing the bovine’s cuticle but we undertook the job. We took off the hide the best we could—in strips and a limb and a part at a time. We left some of it as the job was not pleasant—and neither was the weather. The funeral preparation—it is different from those of people most always as the animal is stripped while the human is dressed. We accelerated the funeral by leaving the caudal appendage unskinned. I thought it respectful to make a few remarks on the life of the deceased, who had been my friend and companion all the days and nights of his brief life—while Kurg caught old David and hitched him to the carcass. I never saw a more ungainly, revolting corpse in my life. He was as stiff as a peckerwood’s bill and as poor as a bed bug. Not having been beautiful in life the imprint of death certainly had not improved the aspect of the dead. I

told Kurg to drive and Os to get astride the yearling's back and make believe he was driving the hearse, and I would follow behind and weep. It was an affecting scene to me, for tender memories were stirred. I remembered the yearling's kindness to me—often, when after milking the cow, I would suck his portion of the milk before I would let him try to satisfy his hunger—and it was only a trial—and he had never said a word. The yearling had died in a last year's sweet potato patch—and the ground was frozen. The procession began. Old David was pricking his ears and snorting now and then. I got hold of the yearling's tail (I thought), so as to keep close, but the tears in my eyes blinded me (I suppose) and I got hold of the mule's anecdote. He looked around. One look was enough for him and I had never seen him so lively as he immediately became. He interrupted the solemnities by demonstrating his traveling qualities. The first plunge threw the steer to its feet. David saw the hideous brute in his backward glance. I did not blame him for fleeing from the terror. I would too if I had been a mule and been in his stead. Os was thrown hard to the ground. The reins were jerked from Kurg's hands. The next ridge in David's flight caused Mage to rear in the air and plunge on top of David's back. Every time the dead yearling's feet would strike a ridge it threw him to his feet or in the air. Some times its head was between the mule's hind legs and again it was pawing David on the rump. It looked more animated than it had in life. David looked askance at the lively corpse in his mad flight and was terrified as he had never been. It was all beyond words to describe. I ran to the house and told

my parents of the catastrophe and they were badly scared. David almost killed himself running and was found a mile from home shaking and quivering. Os had a bow knot in his neck, his face bloody, and teeth full of beef—otherwise he was not damaged.

One bright spring day Uncle Peter Squash made us a visit, driving an old bony, gray mare to a rickety no-top buggy. Aunt Jemima Salt was with him and intended to make her home with us for some time. We were glad to see them. Aunt Jemima was an old maiden sister of my mother. She was red-headed and freckle-faced. Uncle Peter was courting of her.

We disposed of old David, swapping him for a horse which better fitted the uses a preacher has for a riding nag. To try the new horse Uncle Peter went with father to an appointment on Successful Mission. It was a sultry, summer Saturday. They stopped in the town where father was to preach the next day. Birdette was a thrifty mountain town of some pretensions. It was a lovely summer resort and boasted of a beautiful college and a large cemetery. It was controlled by the sect who style themselves Christians. They were courteous to father and loaned him their church building, as the Methodists did not have a house in that place.

In the afternoon of this particular day father and Uncle Peter, in the course of their sight seeing, went to the cemetery. They viewed the scenery awhile and lay beneath the cool shade of a luxuriant tree to rest. The cemetery contained several imposing monuments and tombstones with inscriptions cut in relief. Uncle Peter stared at the largest one, which was near to where he lay, and shortly asked, "Ike, by the way,

who is thet man Rest? Shucks on, gentlemen, he must been a big feller."

"I do not know anyone of that name, Peter. Why do you ask?" said father.

"I see his name on some of the big grave stones. I 'lowed ye had he'rn of him or knowed his people, but it seems the most of them's dead."

"I have not seen the name on any of the tombstones. Show me the ones you saw."

"Why, jist there A. T. Rest, as plain as daylight. Now, do ye know enything erbout him?"

"That is 'at rest' in large letters, Peter," said father convulsing with laughter.

On their return home Os met Uncle Peter with this question, "How much is two nickles, Uncle Peter?"

"It's a dime, you igneramus," responded Uncle Peter testily, "why?"

"Just because I wanted to know how much old man Nichols and his wife were. I expect they are not much if they are no more than a dime," argued Os—and Uncle Peter began picking his teeth with his jack knife. The Nichols were new neighbors of ours.

Uncle Peter was spruced up as we had never seen him and he tried to be as supple as a cat. He affected great manners on this visit and hung admiringly close, if not closer, to Aunt Jemima's side as he could—and that was as close as possible sometimes, or at least one time. I happened to espy Aunt Jemima leaning against his arm in the kitchen door at twilight one evening. Uncle Peter had been using spectacles for years but while at our home he discarded them and vowed that he could see a chigoer a quarter of a mile—but I noticed that he often read the newspa-

pers bottom upwards. He had his hair and shoes greased until one could see himself. I thought I saw his profile on Aunt Jemima's auburn hair one day—when the sunshine glinted on her golden tresses—but I may have been mistaken, yet her hair and face looked very grasy on one side when Kurg, Os and myself swooped down on them behind the hollyhaws in one of our Comanche escapades. I overheard Uncle Peter say: “Drat those boys. Ike has got the tarnaeousest, meanest boys thet ever breethed. They used to be right good boys, but I allus he’rn preecher’s children were the very wust on earth.”

That occasion was the time we boys got fixed. I liked to be close to the “silly doves,” as mother called them, or suddenly come in their presence, and I had directed our play that day to that end. We had wooden pistols, wooden knives, and stick horses, and I was a savage bearing down on innocent whites, and had instructed Kurg and Os to hide in the tall grass and dog fennel near the hollyhaws. Uncle Peter called it “dog family.” The pestiferous weed was in bloom. We were tired. So we rolled in the cool green retreat to be near the loving pair. Presently Os raised a howl. He had gotten dog fennel in his eyes, nostrils and mouth. This was more fun than I had bargained for. In the house he went—we children ever sought mother first when anything was wrong. Our cow was nearly dry and as we had visitors, mother used butter sparingly. Uncle Peter said that butter was the only thing that would alleviate the smart of dog fennel. So Os was lain on a bed with a lump of butter on each eye and under his nose and his lips buttered, which took about a third of all

the butter on the place. In a few moments Kurg burst blindly into the room, crying, spitting, and rubbing eyes and nose, and jumping up and down very fast. He was put beside Os on the bed and buttered nicely—another third of the butter was used. The butter was soothing and the boys looked so serene and placid, and I had no one to play with, hence out of sympathy and a desire to be with them and secure attention, I concluded to get sick also. I knew how to do it, but instead of make believe I actually plucked a bunch of fennel and rubbed it in my nose and eyes. It was a long time in taking effect and I was beginning to despair, when, lo! I never had such awful stinging and burning in my life, in my nose, eyes and mouth. I had a worse case than the boys. It was like fire. I squalled and bellowed and rolled and tumbled—but I was put on the bed with my brothers and had the remainder of the butter served on my face. The boys recovered in a short time, but I nearly died. The fennel had gotten inside of my nose, eyes and mouth, and inflamed them so badly that I was almost blind for a week, my nose as red as a toper's and I could not spit straight. Verily, ignorance is not bliss.

Uncle Peter and Aunt Jemima relished our punishment very much. "Pressing bizness," Uncle Peter said made it necessary for him to terminate his visit at once—but I thought that that business seemed to be with Aunt Jemima—and he went home, without even swapping horses once, and Os and I went with him.

CHAPTER IX.

In the City.

This year the Jerusalem conference was held at a fashionable city church in the capital of the State. An undergraduate goes to conference a day or two before the beginning of the regular session, to be examined, and Rev. Squash invariably was ahead of time in going and the last to leave in returning. He had not drawn the last quarter's check on the appropriated part of his salary despite the hard year.

After expenses of the trip were paid he was in the city with only fifteen cents in his pocket. He carried a large, old-fashioned valise, full of books and clothing. To catch the train he had left home at three o'clock in the morning and had breakfasted lightly. He arrived in the city at noon, as hungry as an honest man could be. During conference, the members of the church where the session is held, entertain the body and visitors.

At the Methodist headquarters our hero consulted the directory and learned the home that had been assigned him. He immediately started afoot for the house of his to-be-host, as he was hungry and he wanted to save street car fare—and he walked fast. Being ignorant of distance and directions in a city the pedestrian—already being hungry and weak—was soon utterly fatigued and bewildered. He was lost. He sat down on the street curbing in an unsavory portion of the city, to refresh himself. After a bit a burly policeman happened along and

the preacher accosted him and asked directions. The minion of law readily gave the desired information and advised him to take a street car.

The preacher hailed the next passing car and boarded it and went whirling through the city. Being tired, the preacher became oblivious to his surroundings, and when he began to come to himself he noticed but a few on the car and the place to look less citified. He had never ridden on a street car, and, not knowing the custom, he kept his seat and said nothing. More and more countrylike was the views on either hand—and there were none on the car but himself and the motorman. In a few minutes the car came to the end of the car line. The motorman asked if he wanted to get off. Father asked if that was a certain street. “Holy Jerusalem and cod-fish oil! That is ten miles back. Why did not you tell where you wanted to get off?” said the man.

“I did not know that I had to. When I rode on the train I never had to tell the conductor where I was going. I have never ridden on a street car, and I confess my ignorance of its regulations,” father replied. He paid car fare again and returned to the city. At the transfer station he got on the right car—and he told the conductor where to put him off. The car stopped at the place and the preacher alighted. He went into the first house and knocked at the door. No response. He knocked louder. Same result. He kicked it. No answer. He saw a small crank near the side of the door. He turned it and such a clang followed that he thought that he had broken something, and thought of running off before anyone

would come out. The door opened before he could put such a resolution into execution. The following colloquy took place:

“Does Brother B. live here?”

“No, sir.”

“Where does he live?”

“I do not know, sir.”

“Who lives at next house above you?”

“I do not know.”

“Who lives below?”

“I do not know.”

“Don’t you know your neighbors?”

“No.”

And the door closed in his face. He tried several houses but it was in vain. He concluded to try the other side of the street, but luck was no better. Meeting a policeman he propounded him the absorbing question.

“Third house below, sor, with the red gables—the brick,” said the accommodating officer. The house was a veritable mansion. The preacher was met at the door by a dashing and buxom, richly dressed woman, who respectfully stepped back a few steps when she saw father.

“This is Sister B., I suppose. I am your brother Squash,” said the preacher, advancing and shaking hands.

“No, sah; I’s de maid,” said the mulatto servant. He was chagrined, but promptly bade the negress to tell her mistress that her preacher was at the door. “You is not Dr. Steeplechaser I knows, and you had better send her your card, sah,” the woman said.

“I have no card. Tell her to come to the door and

I will tell her myself who I am," said the preacher.

"A man at the door wants to see you, Mrs. B. He said he was your preacher."

"Dr. Steeplechaser! Lud, Mary, why didn't you show him in? You know him."

"'Tain't him and he said for to tell you to come to the door."

"I would like to know who it is—some little charity monger is forever bothering me." And she strutted majestically to the door and drew herself up haughtily.

The preacher introduced himself and shook hands with her—against her will. She did not invite him in. He stood with valise in hand on the top step.

"Whom did you say you were?"

"Squash, ma'am; the preacher who is to stay with you during conference."

"Conference does not convene until day after to-morrow, and—"

"I know that it does not, but I am an undergraduate and had to come to-day so as to take my examination. I trust my early coming will not be an encroachment. I shall be easily pleased, and do not put yourself to any extra trouble on my account."

"Mr. Squash, I am very sorry, but we were not expecting you until day after to-morrow and we are not prepared to take you until that time. We have company, and—"

"But you must. The entertainment committee assigned me to stay with you and I have no other place to go."

"We cannot take you I have told you, and I am sorry."

“Sister, I am an humble, worthy Methodist preacher on a poor work and I am depending on staying here. I will be no trouble. I must stay.”

“You cannot. Go to the hotel.”

“I have no money, except five cents, and I am going to stay here, for I will not stay on the streets. I was sent here and I am here—so tired and hungry that I cannot go farther, if I had some place to go.”

“Well, I will consult my sister and see if we can make any possible arrangements.”

A part of the conversation could be heard in feminine pitch of voice.

“I never saw such impertinence!”

“Why didn’t you tell him to leave?”

“He says he is going to stay whether or no.”

“Have the police eject him. I would not tolerate such impudence.”

The lady with regal tread swept back to the door, where she found the preacher sitting upon the doorsteps in the October sunshine.

“We cannot take you, Mr. Squash,” she said icily.

“Well, I shall rest for I am too tired to go farther; then I shall shake the dust off of my feet and see the committee,” said Rev. Squash, and he entered and seated himself upon a sofa in the hallway.

The mistress held another consultation with her sister. “He will not leave. He is sitting in the hall. What must we do?”

“Telephone Mr. B.”

The lady telephoned her husband who told her to send him to the hotel. She tripped to the hall again and told the preacher to go to the hotel. He asked her for the money or an order.

“I shall fix that by telephoning. They know me.”

Rev. Squash rested a while longer and then in the presence of the woman he carefully wiped the dust off of his feet with a bandanna handkerchief, and started afoot for the hotel the lady had directed him to. He purchased five cents worth of peanuts from a street vender and went his way. He entered the hotel and marched up to the office.

“What will you have, sir?” asked the clerk affably, who was idly thrumming the desk.

Father told him what the lady had said.

“I am busy just at present. Take a chair. I will attend to the matter in a moment,” said he and he took up a pen and began writing. After an elapse of a quarter of an hour the preacher interrupted the clerk.

“I want a room and something to eat. I am worn-out.”

“I will be through shortly,” said the clerk absently. “Can you not wait a moment?” Another quarter of an hour passed.

CHAPTER X.

Out of Difficulties into Others.

"See here, young man, I see that you are making an excuse of being busy. What do you mean by ignoring me in that manner? I am a gentleman I will have you know and I demand of you of where is the proprietor. This business must be settled."

"The gov'ner is in Florida."

"No matter where he is, I am going to have accommodations if it can be secured in this city. I shall proceed to help myself if you do not help me."

"All right, sir; but did you not know that the lady you mentioned telephoned me before you came that you or someone claiming to be a preacher would probably come here and for me not to take you, as she sent you here to get rid of you?"

"I am going to stay at her expense and you had as well begin to accord me the privilege of staying. I shall not worry myself any longer."

"You are the man Mrs. B. sent here?"

"Yes."

"I will telephone her and see what she says."

Only one side of the interview could be heard. "Yes, he is here."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"Yes."

"I think there is no mistake."

"He says that he is going to stay at your expense."

"No!"

“Ha! ha!”

“When will Mr. B. be in?”

“Six o’clock, you say?”

“Yes.”

“When have you seen Miss Geraldwyn? Give her my compliments. She is certainly the loveliest girl I know.”

“Very well.”

“Good bye.”

The clerk began writing again. In a few moments the preacher became indignant and asked what was to be done.

“You are a preacher?”

“Yes.”

“You have no money?”

“No.”

“How long will you have to stay?”

“I will try to see the committee this afternoon and have them give me a place.”

“Well, sir, we will take you, I suppose.”

A porter took the battered, weather-worn valise and he and the preacher stepped into an elevator and it shot heavenward until it struck the roof. The preacher was given the highest back room in the house. There were no towel, comb nor brush in the room, neither was there any water. The colored man was ordered to bring some water, which he did and left. After absolving himself of the grime and stain of travel, the mountain preacher began looking for the call button. Finding it he vigorously punched it and it set off a gong far, far below which rang like a town clock. A negro answered the call pell-mell with a pitcher of water. The preacher thought the

number of rings accounted for what he received—and the conjecture was true—and, as he had all the water he wanted, he concluded to try his luck for other articles he needed, so he punctuated the gong with a large number of jabs. He got stationery this time. He varied the button exercise and a one-eyed white woman and a negro girl appeared on the scene. He surmised that they were chambermaids and he ordered them to tidy the musty smelling room and to change the bed linen. They argued against it, but his order prevailed.

“I want a towel and comb and brush. I cannot find any,” he said.

“The guests furnish their own toilet articles,” replied the hotel servants.

“I am one who does not. Go and get them for me.”

“Give us the money, sir, and we will.”

“No; get them and charge them to the hotel or yourself, I do not care who, just so you get them.”

They hesitated, but complied, returning with the much wanted things.

“Now, when can I get something to eat? It is past two o’clock,” he said looking at his open-faced, silverine timepiece, “and I am about to starve.”

“You may go to the dining room now if you are ready.”

Of course he was ready—and to the elevator he went and dropped straight down for several hundred feet, and found himself at last where he wanted to be. The menu card being in French and words he did not well comprehend, the hungry clericus chose at random and what he secured to eat was something he did not like

—tasteless soup, insipid beef of sole leather texture, a dish he could not name, another soup (noodle or mul-ligatawny) and dishes, garlic-flavored and unpalatable. He forced himself to eat all he could, and went to his room hungry. At the door he saw directions for the call button just above the button. He had to lay down—and he fell asleep. Late in the afternoon the poor, tired preacher was disturbed in his slumbers by loud knocking on his door. He aroused himself and bade the visitor enter. It was a colored hotel employe.

“Boss, dare am a man down stairs wanting you.”

“Who is he?”

“Dunno, Boss, but he said fer you to come down dare.”

“You go and tell him if he wants to see me any worse than I do him, to come up here.”

The darkey looked ominously and undecided, but conveyed the message. He returned in a short while and said, “Boss, here is de man’s card. He said fer you to come down to de parlor.” Rev. Squash read the engraved card: “Rev. P. H. Steeplechaser, pastor of Highsteeple Methodist church.”

“You go and tell Brother Steeplechaser the distance is just the same from him to me as it is from me to him.”

“Look here, boss, dare am a whole lot of trouble ’kase of you already some how. I ’spec you had better go down and see the gentleman.”

“I am not going. I do not care how much trouble I am causing. I have been caused trouble enough myself, to-day. Tell the man what I say.”

“Boss, ’pon my word, you air making a fuss in de

camp shore as I'se born. I'll go but whar am your card?"

"I do not use cards. Here, take this," and he scribbled, "Rev. Isaac Squash, pastor of Successful Mission," on the reverse side of Rev. Steeplechaser's card. The darkey obeyed and the city pastor was soon in the country preacher's room. He greeted the mission pastor brotherly and was very apologetical for the treatment that had been accorded him.

"Brother, do not let your feelings be wounded longer. Just so soon as I learned of your case I personally took the matter in hand. I have secured you an elegant home and I have come for you. I am sure you shall like it much better than you would have the first one given you. Some of our city people, brother, are very selfish, and you know they have been imposed upon in time. I regret the uncharity shown you, but why did you not come to me?" said Dr. Steeplechaser.

Father told him all. The city preacher's words were as balm of Gilead to his bleeding heart and he gladly went to the home of Dr. J., where he was to be guest. Mrs. J., who was by the way a social rival of Mrs. B., was a true Christian lady who could appreciate one's worth under untoward conditions and circumstances. She was not contented until she had heard a full rehearsal of Rev. Squash's troubles. She took great pains to show him every kindness. She and her husband vied with each other in entertaining him during his stay with them. Noting that the preacher walked to church, Dr. J. asked why did he not take a car. Father told him that he preferred to walk. It rained one day and still the preacher walk-

ed. Dr. J. presented him with car passes enough to ride the rest of the time he stayed. The last night of conference a cousin of father, who was a local preacher, told father that he had discovered a relative of theirs who resided in the city, and for them to visit him. After the evening service they started for their kinsman's home. They walked, but after a tramp of an hour, they decided to take a cab. On and on, down streets, across streets, through alleys and crossings they rode, until the preachers went to sleep. The cabman woke them up, struck a light to show them he was at the right number, got his pay, and left them. They knocked at the door.

"Who is that?" said a gruff voice within.

They told him.

"I don't know you."

They told him again their names and their business.

"Get away from my door!"

"Is that you cousin, John Stump?"

"No! Get away from this place."

"Where does he live?"

"Get away and let us alone or I will make you."

"Where does John Stump live?"

"Get away and let us alone. I don't know him."

They asked more questions, but the man raved and swore and ordered them to leave. Hearing a window raise and fearing they might get shot, they left. But where could they go? They were in an unknown place. There were no streets or etreet lights. They could not tell how far it was or what direction to take, to where they knew. It was midnight. The cabman was gone. Houses were scarce and silent, except

the one they had visited and its inmate was irate. They were tired and sleepy.

They wandered until they saw a glimmering light to which they made their way. They were overcome in body and spirit when they reached it. A Scandinavian approached them when they entered and asked them what he could do for them. They asked if they could secure lodging and were told that they could. They were in a low dive saloon, and men were drinking and swearing. The bartender jerked a small negro boy from the counter and gave him a bunch of keys and told him to show the gentlemen to their room. The room given them was uninviting. Its walls were covered with blood stains. A door panel was broken and the door had no lock. The bed was rickety and had more vermin than covering—they learned later. One broken chair, a soap box, and a smoky kerosene lamp were all the accommodations. The two preachers did not take off their clothing and covered themselves with their great coats. Curses and drunken yells and oaths awoke them several times and smote their hearts with fear, during the night. The next morning they did not take breakfast, but left instant, with blotched faces and hands. They had spent a night in the tenderloin district.

Rev. Squash was returned to Successful Mission for another year—and came home the very day after conference adjourned.

CHAPTER XI.

Miscellaneous Episodes.

Near Squashville was a camp meeting ground, where each year pastors of surrounding charges met in union revival effort. In olden days regular camp meeting services were held there, but the practice had been discontinued, although many people still carried tents and spent the time on the grounds. The relatives with whom Os and myself were visiting had a tent. One morning I begged Aunt Phoebe Squash for one of the sweet potatoes that was roasting in the embers, but she denied me the hot tuber and commanded me to go to—preaching. I wore a thin cotton checked shirt, which was most always unfastened at the neck, some tight breeches, and was barefooted. I wore a crownless hat without any brim—that is, I was bareheaded. The meeting was in full headway at this time. I had not yet been approached, but this morning I was invited to go to what was called the mourner's bench—and I went because I was asked. Several old, sleepy-looking preachers talked very sadly to me, telling me how mean I was, and some old ugly women shook hands with me and cried. I wondered how the men knew about me and if I was as mean as that, to be the reason the women cried. I was sure that they were mistaken in the party, and I could not think of what I had done that was so bad. Anyway it was, they made me feel very badly. I saw an old man shouting, whom I had heard broke three of his father's ribs once when he got happy.

A man was talking to me, and the odor of his breath was anything but fragrant and I had my head turned.

The old man saw me after a bit and here he came. He grabbed the man talking to me and myself in a bear's hug, which threw our heads together, and nearly crushed the breath out of me. I freed myself and slipped to the other end of the bench, and knelt down and cried.

I was alone when I was feeling the worse, but I preferred it to any of the company I had had.

Os came in the building about this time and seeing me crying, thought it was because I had not gotten a roasted potato that morning. He had heard me asking for one and being refused. He left the house and while Aunt Phoebe was getting dinner in the tent he poked a smoking potato out of the fire and brought it to me. He slipped up to me and whispered, "Here, take it." I did not hear him nor see him.

A hot potato is hard to hold, and he did not urge me to take it very much. Thinking, perhaps, I was scorning his kindness after he had run so much risk, he concluded to make me take it, and he threw it at me. My collar was open and the hot potato rolled down my bosom. I jumped into the air and shouted at the top of my voice. Happy relatives flocked to me and embraced me—and mashed that potato all over my breast like a mustard plaster, only it was hotter than one. Of course I cried and squalled and jumped. Every one said that they never had seen a brighter profession of religion. I never informed them of their mistake and I was

persuaded to join the church. There are scars on my breast yet.

Os and myself shortly afterwards went home, and we moved to the town of Birdette.

We had no parsonage, but rented a house. The simple pleasures, the happy hours, the blissful ties of those halcyon days will never be effaced from memory. How often, when burdened with the cares and responsibilities of life, do I stop and permit my mind to revert to the innocent days of childhood! Sometimes, when sad and lonely, my heart joins the plaintive cry of the poet, "Turn backward, O Time in your flight and make me a child just for to-night!" Those forever gone sweet hours, how I did enjoy them! And when I see a romping lad in his glee and mischief I almost envy him of his lot. What heart does not long for the happiest days of life—especially a heart like mine, one, battered and scarred, disappointed and broken! Misspent opportunities, disappointments, dissipation, and wrong doings, such as has been my folly, wells my heart with such contrition, regret, and woe, that scalding tears burn my cheeks, and I wish I had died when I was prepared—only that is weakness, and some way I have buffeted the waves and am still dive dappering and floating with the flotsam upon the yellow, murky tide of time.

At Squashville there lived an old man whom the boys delighted to tantalize. One day he came to where some of them were making molasses at an evaporator. Seeing him coming they concocted to play a prank on him, and they covered up a vile skimming hole with some cane. It was but a short while before the old man had tumbled into the pool

of filth and was floundering and plunging, trying to get out.

“You boys don’t care how much you hurt me!” he groaned; “you make me so mad that some times I would not care if I died and went to hell—only if I was just prepared.”

So had my thoughts been. I always was a worshipper of nature. The mountain scenery and grandeur were picturesque and fantastic. I spent the most of my spare time communing with the old mother. There was not a fastness, cave nor crag, for miles adjacent to Birdette, that I did not explore in search for wild flowers and fruits or in quest of bird nests or small animals.

Near the town was a wild, secluded retreat, known as Lover’s Leap, which would have made a picture for a painter’s brush. It attracted all passing tourists and was a trysting place for young hearts. If the silent cliffs could speak they would have told the “old, old story” in all its silliness, tenderness, and pathos, for the college girls and boys stole from vigilant watch of the college faculty and wended their way to the inspiring spot, where they cooed and wooed, said sweet nothings and expressed serious thoughts. I am confident that many a “yes” was given when it would have been otherwise at any other place. I have often wished that I might have had the privilege of speaking the love and secrets of my heart to a woman fair, amid the glory and beauty of this sacred spot, on a spring day—perhaps, the zephyr breeze, the blooming flowers, the singing birds, and babbling water, would have made a different result.

It was a high frowning bluff at the top of where mountain walls met together, and from between a streamlet ran, splashing, dashing, over small precipices, gathering force—here a pellucid pool, there a foaming cataract—onward, downward, through the gorge it passed until lost to sight in the dark valley. Laurel and lichens clung between the cleft rocks to the scant soil and gigantic pines, some bare and dead and broken, overhung the height. Beneath pine needles and velvet moss carpeted the rocks with a soft, fragrant covering.

'Twas a dreary place in winter. The wind moaned and scoughed through the pines, chanting requiems or shrilly screeching like a lost and damned spirit. The skies were leaden and solitude pervaded the bleak and desolate spot.

In spring and summer it was lovely beyond compare—a poem, a picture.

A legend, from which the place derived its name, was, that two lovers years ago met here and quarrelled. The girl bade her lover leave her—and before she was aware of his intentions he sprang from her side and jumped from the dizzy height of the bluff. She rushed to the brink and looked below. He lay far beneath a mangled corpse. Her love for him made her insane and uttering a mad shriek, she plunged headlong to the rocks below. There she was found with her brains dashed out, while her lover's body lay upon a ledge above. Some said blood stains remained on the rocks until that day. I do not know whether the tragedy was true or not—but I know quite a number jumped into matrimonial relations on account of the romantic influences.

In some unaccountable way I never could resist the subtle attraction of woman. I believe I love them all—of course I love some better than I do others and generally one above all.

We Squash children were put in college. It was a mixed school and there I met lassies as sweet as molasses. I loved them at a distance. Nothing gave me more satisfaction than to be called upon to grant a sweet girl a favor. One little vixen, with her smiles and honeyed words, could get me to do anything in my power for her. She admired a bouquet of wild flowers I carried the teacher one day and said that she wished some one thought enough of her to bring her such a beautiful bunch of flowers. The next day she got a much larger, sweeter bouquet—but I got a whipping at home for being gone so long a time after them. I had to go down in a dark canon for them. Then, I carried her the most choice fruit I could find. When fruit at home gave out I pilfered a neighbor's orchard. I sought the woods for gifts and carried her serviceberries, whortleberries, muscadines, fox-grapes, summer-grapes, black haws, hazel-nuts, chestnuts, hickory-nuts, and scurvy-root for tooth brushes. I got plenty of empty smiles and thanks in return.

I have been no better a man than I was a boy. I have bitten and bitten again and again the same hook, just so it was not put out by the same fisherwoman each time. It is like chasing butterflies. They are valueless if you catch one.

CHAPTER XII.

Playmates and Scrapes.

Among my playmates at Birdette were two boys I distinctly remember. One was called "Daddy" because of his ancient mien and the other "Sheepkiller" on account of his dogged and sneaked demeanor. They were not our choice but fate threw them with us. They were inferior to us Squash boys. They were invincibly ignorant and credulous. They could not learn at school. They were shiftless, good-hearted, ill-treated youths, who never knew—and never will know—anything but the hardest kind of existence.

We had immense fun with them. I was the leader. Those boys would have bled, fought and died for me. The worse I treated them the more they seemed to like me. We were together every day. We invited them to eat dinner with us at first. They said that they would go home, for a time or two, but, as they got better acquainted, they ate with us every time—dinner and supper too. My mother's splendid cooking was to their notion and I learned that they did not have a noon-meal at home. Their eating with us so often caused my parents to forbid us playing together. I saw the boys the next day come to the play grounds and heard them whistle and make signals for us. We did not go. They tried to play the usual games, but there seemed to be a lack which the Squash boys only could supply. Then they lay down and talked.

We missed the fun, too, and the boys looked so lone-

some, that I got Kurg and Os and we made a circuitous route to where they were. I resolved to be with the boys and to keep them from eating with us. About noon I heard mother call me. I went to the house and ate. I came back and told Kurg that he was wanted at the house. He returned and sent Os to eat. We spoke of the errands we had to run at the house. We were fresh for play in the afternoon and rallied the boys in our sport. But they would lose interest and lag. Finally they would say: "We are awful hongry. Aren't you?"

"No," we would vow; "come on and let us play. We will let you be the fox, and we will be the hounds." The ruse worked nicely. Again, we would manage to have them be near their homes at meal time and we would dodge them and scamper home. Kurg and Os got "Daddy" into a scrape one afternoon, which almost exterminated him. He went with them to the pasture to bring the cows home. They let down the crossbars and told "Daddy" to lie down in the gap and watch the cows go through while they drove them—that it was more fun than going to a circus. He did as he was bidden, but I doubt if he ever has seen the fun of it. The boys had to turn out about a dozen head of cattle. The kine were in a run by the time they got to the opening and were kicking, butting and hooking each other and old "Budge", our dog. One or two cows passed safely over without seeing the recumbent figure in the gap. "Daddy" concluded that he had seen all he cared to and that it was dangerous to see more, and he accordingly attempted to get out of the way. He rose to his knees. The boys were urging the unruly

bovines onward. Just then two started over together and struck "Daddy" full force. After the dust cleared away "Daddy's" face was full of cow tracks, a few teeth were missing, his nose was bleeding, his clothing torn, and he was more dead than alive—and Kurg and Os were frightened out of their wits. I happened to arrive in time to save Rome. I told "Daddy" that he had not followed instructions, and washed his face and brushed his clothing, and gave him all the store tobacco I had, not to mention it.

He was so busy paying devotion to Pluto and other infernal deities that I could not pacify him until I threatened to never let him play with us again and to shove him off of Lover's Leap or tie him to a tree and set a hornet's nest by him and throw rocks at it. It had only been a few days before that a hornet had lighted between his eyes like a sledge-hammer blow—and he subscribed to my terms. I even was so kind as to prepare him a speech to tell his parents.

But he got "Sheepkiller" to take revenge on Kurg. "Sheepkiller" and "Daddy" were loyal friends, ever and inseparable. I noticed a lurking droop in "Sheepkiller's" weather-eye which forbode a covert step and I set myself to unfathom the plot and warn Kurg, but he accomplished his design before I was aware of it. He persuaded Kurg to go hunting with him and wear his Sunday hat—"he could kill more field larks with it on."

"Sheepkiller" was a Nimrod and his logic was convincing. After trudging through tall weeds and bog and marsh for some time, the hunters stopped to rest, and "Sheepkiller" proposed that they shoot at

each other's hats. Kurg was afraid to. "Sheepkiller" coaxed and artfully bantered.

"If you will, I will let you wad your hat jest as little as you kin make it and I will shoot at it with the rifle, and I will let you shoot at my hat as it is the same distance with the shotgun," generously offered "Sheepkiller." Kurg accepted the challenge.

The distance was measured and the hats placed, and the boys shot. Kurg's hat would not have made a respectable pepper box, it was so full of holes, while "Sheepkiller's" headgear had only been touched with one or two scattering bird shot. Kurg knew that he would lose part of his anatomy if the affair was noised and that it would do no good to attempt to secure justice from "Sheepkiller's" parents. He came to me with his troubles. The incident would be learned by Sunday because the hat would have to be produced. I admonished him on the foolishness of the course he had pursued, that he should have been suspicious and been on his guard—and I let the lesson soak deep into his cranium. I relieved his dismay the next day by offering my assistance in getting a new hat. We went out in town and I secured a job splitting seasoned stove-wood and cleaning out a stable. The work was hard, the day warm, and the pay small. Kurg said, "Let us quit. I will take a whipping and you and I can give "Sheepkiller" the best in our shop."

"No," said I; "you must not get a whipping. We will get a hat just like your holey one was when it was new, and then we will give "Sheepkiller" a Roland for his Oliver."

Our hands were blistered and we thought the wood pile was like the widow's meal—it never would give out. We worked three days before we finished the jobs and then lacked a dime—and it was Saturday. Late that afternoon a stranger gave Kurg ten cents for holding his horse—and we bought the hat.

One Sunday "Daddy" cajoled Os to ride down a steep declivity in an empty sugar barrel. A bent nail or two played havoc with the young Squash. "Daddy's" vengeance had been wreaked. I waxed wroth and sought opportunity to take "a tooth for a tooth."

CHAPTER XIII.

The Way the Ball Winds.

Writing histories is not easy. The ball of life is not one long, even kind of thread, but is composed of all kinds of strings. It may be easy to put together, but it is difficult to unwind and put in a presentable shape. I have gotten the balls from which I am weaving this narrative, so mixed that I hardly know where they all are. I have broken threads, and dropped ends and left out little worthless scraps, and used one ball so long, that I do not care to be historian again. But I hope to unkink the tangles ere I throw up the sponge, although I confess the meshes to be already so confused as to weary the patience of the gentle reader. I expect this history is like Joseph's coat—of many colors.

The long and short of it, Uncle Peter made a flying trip to our house and took to his bosom as bride his red-headed lover, my aunt, Jemima Salt. Another Salt had been Squashed or another Squash had been Salted. Much as my interest and observation had been my youthful inexperience makes me ignorant of their courtship, except the inferential sidelight of later years I gleaned in Uncle Peter's precepts and confidential lectures on women.

While I was ever a quid nunc I have had often to surmise and be satisfied. I know an old widower is the biggest fool in fooldom when he falls in love—but that proves woman to be a blessing to a man's life.

Woman can be a blessing and she can be a curse. The suitable one makes a man's life the brighter. An old widower rarely uses judgment—and the woman he marries does not either—and the marriage is very often a bad bargain. Uncle Peter and Aunt Jemima seemed to be as happy as negroes—and they ventured into Cupidom unmolested.

The appointments and disappointments of Successful Mission still held Rev. Squash's attention and he endeavored to bring the work and its name in closer relation, by every effort in his power. A Methodist preacher is very much like a cow boy. The circuit is a ranch. He is constantly overlooking the flock—if he does his duty—branding some, breaking some, shearing some, and losing some.

Rev. Squash had a protege—a limber-jointed, gawky, gosling sort of fellow—under him. He lassoed the colt when he was on Starvation Circuit, and the youngster, being willing to work to the Gospel wagon, followed him to the present field. That young horse, after many falls and failures, became a prize animal and to-day, although he kicked out of the Methodist harness, is a star racer on the Presbyterian race track in the North. His name is Silas Jonathan Foster Dooks.

Dooks was eccentric. At one of the churches on Successful Mission, the membership consisted of a few old men, women and children. Dooks and Rev. Squash “let down their net” for a solid week without so much as catching a minnow. They had resorted to every plan they knew until Dooks formulated a method which proved beneficial.

“To-day I shall preach,” he said in consultation.

“Leave the whole thing to me. I am going to have a move.”

“What do you intend doing?” asked Squash.

“Wait and see. You must obey me. All I want you to do is to sing when I say for you to and not to stop until I order you to,” said Dooks.

The young prophet remained long “in his tent” “and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook” with which to meet Goliath. The audience was of fair size. The preacher announced this text: “Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.”

He dissertated upon the importance of being religious, for awhile, and called for the church to come into the altar for consecration. They were simple folk, sincere and zealous. Among the members of the church were four sisters named Jones. They were hale females of great strength. All the church members present came as they had been doing for a week, and vowed to do as they were bidden. At the close of prayer Dooks arose and whispered to the old men within the chancel, who went and closed the doors and stood sentinels.

Dooks then said: “Christian soldiers, sin is rife. It has pervaded the sanctity of our homes and our loved ones are being damned before our eyes, and we are not doing much to save them. Are we going to let them go to hell without doing our full duty toward them? If they were in imminent physical danger we would risk our lives to save them. For the love you have for them save them. I have preached and Brother Squash has piped for a week and we have not them saved

yet. The text says to compel them to come in and compel means to make them. While we sing let us do our duty and go out in the highways and hedges and bring them in. Sing, Brother Squash!"

Squash sang, "Bring them In." Dooks marched into the audience and took a slump of a boy by the arm and led him struggling to the altar. The women imitated his example. The sinners were the most perplexed set one ever saw. One made a dive out of the window, but a Jones woman caught him by the leg and pulled him back. So soon as a sinner was corraled, another was sought. A brother of the Jones sisters concluded to test strength with the women and he locked his hands around a post. One sister was pulling at him, when Dooks called out, "Help that woman get that fellow aloose from that pillar," and another sister went to the rescue. The man cursed and said, "Let me alone. If I wanted to go up there I would. I don't want to go and I won't." Another woman got hold of him. They all steadily pulled and wrenched his hands apart and then began a scuffle. Benches were overturned and the man struggled and fought, but he was dragged to the altar and fell on his face.

"It looks like you could let a fellow do as he pleases in this free land," one fellow said.

Every unconverted person in the house—a few had escaped—were unceremoniously "compelled to come in" the altar. Dooks commanded the singing to stop and every Christian to get as close as he could to the sinners. The weather was warm and the sinners had to profess to keep from smothering if not to keep from being damned. The services were continued until all

the penitents were converted or under genuine conviction. That start was the beginning of a wonderful revival at that place, and the men who were compelled to be religious I learn made exceptionally useful members of the church. Let other preachers emulate the example.

Dooks said: "There is nothing like the sweating process. Converting sinners is like putting away sweet potatoes. If you put away sweet potatoes wet they are apt to rot, but they keep if carried through a sweat."

The fourth of July, Os and "Sheepkiller" were upstairs at our house and father was asleep on a pallet at the foot of the stairs. "Sheepkiller" was peeping over the stairway to see that all was well, while Os was stretching a sock apiece over the heads of three or four cats. A blind-folded feline is a ludicrous object. Two of the cats fell over the stairway, turned a few somersaults in the air and landed right in the preacher's face. The surprise gave him a stroke of hysteria and he seized the first thing he could lay hands on—which was a bootjack—and threw it at "Sheepkiller." The aim was true and the weapon cut a number of geometrical figures on the boy's face. Blood spurted freely and "Sheepkiller" fled before we could learn the extent of his injuries.

We entered school after vacation. "Daddy" and "Sheepkiller" also became pupils. We were not as friendly as had been our wont, but the strained relations were due to our own animosity as the boys evinced willingness "to forgive and forget the past." Kurg and myself still wanted that "tooth" or "eye."

Our teacher was a crabbed, fussy man, who ruled with a rod of iron. Before many weeks waned a golden chance was given me to give "Sheepkiller" retaliation for shooting Kurg's hat full of holes. "Sheepkiller" brought a "devil's-claw" to school one morning. When the teacher's back was turned he would slip behind him as if he would stick the claw in the teacher. This performance was producing a suppressed titter in several quarters of the room. I carefully concealed a pin in "Sheepkiller's" seat. He went closer this time than he had ever gone. I crept behind him and gave him a push. The sharp devil's-claw sank deep into the teacher's flesh. I was in my seat before the teacher could turn around, but he saw "Sheepkiller" just as that gentleman sat down and suddenly arose. "Sheepkiller" caught such a whipping that I was sorry I had caused it—the pin had had effect enough. After that we were fast friends.

The Squash scions were average boys and average preacher's sons. Uncle Peter asked father why preacher's children were the worst children. Before father could reply Kurg said:

"Uncle Peter, a sheep eats grass, a horse eats grass, and a goose eats grass—one grows wool, one hair, and one feathers. That is the reason."

Uncle Peter changed the conversation. Whether Kurg's philosophy answered the question or not, I deny the premises. A preacher may naturally have the worst son in the land, but a preacher's son is not necessarily the worst. It is due to the fact his meanness is noticed more than the wrong of other boys. More is expected of him than of others. He

has a better chance to be mean than other boys. His father is away from home a great deal; he generally lives in a town and is thrown with bad boys, and he moves often. But he, also, has better influences thrown around him and has better opportunities than other boys. I admit his mistakes and sins but I must believe that he will compare favorably with any class of boys in the land. The fact of so many great and good men coming from his ranks attest the conclusion. In this book I make no attempt to defend the preacher's children, but I let the ban fall where it belongs.

I intend to give an impartial glimpse "behind the curtains." Much of the criticism is unwarranted and is due to prejudice and ignorance. Our whole family have been subjected to adverse and unjust condemnation.

Father carried Dooks to Squashville with him for a visit. They attended a Baptist service where the eucharist was partaken. An invitation was extended to all of the Lord's children to commune, but the Baptists exclude all other denominations. After the Baptist communicants had observed the service. Dooks arose and said:

"Hold on, brother. I am a child of God and this is the Lord's supper. As you will not permit me to take it with you I will just help myself." And he took the bread and wine and gave father some and took some himself, and resumed his seat.

Dooks was the preacher, who was to preach once for a country church, and was late. Another preacher was there and he preached. The last song was being sung when Dooks arrived. He gravely entered

the pulpit and preached without knowing the mistake. Another time Dooks in lining the hymn "Amazing Grace" spoke the words backwards: "A grazing mouse, how sweet the sound!"

Rev. Squash made just as bad a mistake. One Sunday he held the preliminary service and made his announcements and sang the doxology and said the benediction—thinking he had preached. Again, on the way to an appointment, one day with mother with him, near the church the buggy broke, and the preacher went for aid. Seeing the crowd and the hour being late, he forgot his wife and went into the church and preached. After dismissal he began looking for his horse and then thought of his wife. She was where he had left her.

CHAPTER XIV.

Pastoral Duties.

Ministers are public servants and the people expect them to pander to their every whim and fancy. The preacher must be punctual, "in season and out of season," and "be all things with all men", else his power will diminish. Some of the duties are onerous, but he must acquit himself creditably. No matter how wearied or troubled he is, or how inclement the weather, or how many deprivations he must undergo, he must hearken and heed.

One hot August afternoon, after the close of the second service, far out in the mountains, Rev. Squash was approached by a tall, lank young mountaineer, who said in a quavering undertone, "Parson, ken ye say a marriage ceremony fer me?"

The preacher assured him that he could and was willing to perform the marriage rites.

"Where is the bride?"

"She is at home. We will have to go over there."

"Very well."

"Say, parson, would you mind walking with myself and brothers and let my sister ride your nag?"

"No, not the least."

The woman mounted the preacher's steed and went ahead and was soon out of sight. A long ridge was ascended and the descent of another began, before the preacher asked, "How far will we have to walk?"

One of the boys answered: "It is only about five miles."

The preacher was not used to walking. He saw that he was in a dilemma. The men were hardened to walking and were long-legged. He had to take two steps to their one to keep aside of them. To make matters still worse it had rained that day and the roads were muddy and slippery. The preacher shed his coat and pressed bravely on. They reached their destination about sundown. The minister was completely wornout. The house was a small log cabin with a board cooking room attached. The cook was at her post from the scent that greeted their olfactory nerves as they entered the cabin. Father sank down into a chair and waited patiently for further orders while a good sized congregation crowded into the room. The preacher finally asked the one sitting next to him how long it would be until the ceremony would begin. He replied that they were waiting on him. "I am ready," said the preacher. The man walked to the back of the room where the to-be bridegroom was squeezing the hand of his lover, and held a whispered conference with them for some time. He came back to the preacher and said:

"Mister, you will tell them how to do, for they are young and inexperienced in such matters."

Whereupon Rev. Squash explained the situation to them and succeeded after much effort in getting the couple upon the floor. They came up close before him and he receded and they followed.

"Stand there, please, and join right hands," he commanded and the blushing pair fumbled around trying to get each other's right hand. At last the preacher united them in the holy bonds of wedlock.

About this time the cook, who was the mother of

the bride, came into the room and said that supper was "spilin' " and that she did not see why they were so long over their little marriage ceremony.

The preacher, the bride and groom and a few others followed her to supper.

Rev. Squash was a Methodist preacher, but he had never seen so much fried chicken at one time in his life. There were several dishes of the brown, crispy, juicy chicken and a sifter full, at least a peck of it, "pressed down, heaped up and running over." It is needless to say that the hungry Squash did full justice to the repast after his long walk.

After supper the father of the bride entertained the company by relating his experience in coon hunting until bed time. The whole crowd spent the night with them.

The preacher was too tired to understand how the good housewife arranged for twenty-five or thirty guests to sleep in that little house with only three beds. It takes a woman's sagacity to solve many problems. She found it feasible however and each one secured accommodations—she made beds and pallets upon the floor.

The preacher slept soundly and arose next morning refreshed—and stiff and sore from the long walk the afternoon before.

The groom, after breakfast, invited the preacher to take a long walk with him. The benedict carried him far out in the mountains and scanned the wood around. The preacher was suspicious of his actions and was thinking of what could be the cause of the offence and how he would defend himself. The man

pulled from his pocket—a large, flabby leather pocketbook, and said:

“Parson, how much do ye charge fer yer trouble?”

The preacher peeped over into the big pocketbook and saw a quarter of a dollar, a dime or two and three or four nickels.

“Young man,” he said, “you are not able to pay me anything. I do not charge you a red cent. Be good to your wife and live right and be a man.”

The honest fellow’s thanks were cordial and profuse and he vowed to ever be the parson’s friend.

When the preacher bade him adieu that morning there was a suspicion of a tear glistening in his sincere eye.

That section of country was sparsely settled and was wild. That night while Rev. Squash was preaching a man wildly dashed up to the pulpit and said:

“Some men outside are trying to kill me. A man throwed a pistol in my face just now, but I caught it before he could shoot. See how the hammer hurt my thumb.”

Before the preacher could realize the import of the disturbance, men were in the doors and windows with shotguns and pistols and men in the audience were drawing knives and revolvers, and the women and children were screaming and clinging to their male relatives. The preacher had heard of some complaint and offence because of some of his preaching, and he supposed it was a drunken mob that had come to mete him justice. He sought to abide by his post and quiet the turmoil, but his voice was drowned in the din and confusion. Then every light was blown out. Quiet and order were restored eventually,

but the crowd was scattered. A mob from a neighboring district was looking for a murderer and had heard that he was at church, and had mistaken the frightened man who ran to the preacher for the fellow. Feuds existed between the two places anyway and the people at church thought that old flames had burst out afresh. Bloodshed was averted by the mob quietly dispersing when they learned the man they wanted was not there.

CHAPTER XV.

Pastoral Duties (continued).

The meeting was resumed on the morrow. A great awakening filled the hearts of the people and the altar of the church was crowded with sinners. One night rain fell in torrents incessantly for hours. When it abated it was midnight. The crowd was slim—the mourners were persistent and were the major part of the crowd. The preacher, several old women and the mourners went to the nearest house to spend the night. The preacher was exhausted as he had been doing all the preaching, singing and praying during the meeting. He asked for a bed just so soon as he arrived at the cabin. The house had but one room. Across the joists some planks were placed, and the preacher was told to climb the wall to them, there he would find a bed. He performed the athletic feat and found the bed and some youngsters in it, but he retired and soon fell asleep. The old women presently had the mourners a mourning and the rest of the crowd singing—just to keep awake if not to continue the good work. In an hour or two, several professed, and the camp raised a mighty shout. This sudden and increased uproar awoke the preacher, who peeped over the edge of his bed to see what was the matter.

A shouting sister saw him and held her hand up to shake hands with him and a new convert grabbed the other hand, and they began to pull him overboard in their excitement. This would not

do for he was in his night clothing. He struggled to free himself from their grasp, but before he was free of one, another grabbed him. In spite of himself it seemed that he would be hauled headlong into their midst—and he was despairing of sustaining his position longer when one foot accidentally caught under a beam and held him fast.

Preaching funerals is a delicate undertaking—for it is an undertaking job all around. A preacher is like a lawyer—the client must be cleared notwithstanding the charge or the guilt, and the person that has joined the “shut-eyed” gang must be transported to heavenly mansions and eternal rest no matter how he lived and died. A good deal of superstition, tradition, and unnecessary and useless trouble is attached to funerals. Imposing services are due to pride and precedent. The proper idea to carry out is to bury the dead instead of parade, ornate, and wait, with costly carriages, kindly words, and precious time. When I am dead, what will I care whether I am dragged away like a dead mule, clad in a night shirt, the next minute after I have expired? The worms will appreciate the corruption the same or more, for they will have less trouble in getting to me. Beside I think it would make me very angry to be exposed to the gaze of a crowd and have to lay there and they say and think what they will. The outlay and attention given the dead would be worth more if bestowed upon the living—when one is dead he has moved from the clayey tenement and does not care an iota of what becomes of the old frame he left. The heathen are as sensible as we are with the dead. A simple funeral with a brief and appropriate serv-

ice is preferred to the gorgeous pretension. A preacher has to get solemn whether he wants to or not at a funeral, but a little practice makes him equal to the task.

One hot July day Rev. Squash was summoned to conduct the funeral of an old man. The corpse had been kept out of ground so long it almost stank. The preacher was unacquainted with the deceased and the living. In the course of his sermon he noticed uneasy and furtive glances toward the coffin which was before him, and a woman fainted. A man came excitedly to him and said the one word, "Look!" and pointed toward the coffin. The lid was slowly rising and had split and the screws were popping out. The preacher thought that if the man was coming to life he would assist him, and he marched down to the box. Gas had generated in the corpse and it had begun to swell. He commanded the body to be interred at once, and left them.

Among the pastoral duties of a Methodist preacher is the baptism of infants, and the rebelling "terribles" often cause merriment and disorder. The "dear child" behaves his worst when being baptized. Rev. Squash tried his apprenticeship hand upon three unwilling children—a baby, a three-year-old girl and a boy of six years. The parents with their offspring in tow, appeared before the preacher and the congregation. The children were not much more than varmints and were entirely ignorant of what was going to befall them. The baby was first. It was furiously kicking and frantically screeching throughout the rite and the preacher could hardly hold it. A splash of cold water in its face made it squall louder when it

recovered its breath. The preacher closed his eyes while repeating the ritualistic form, in baptizing the little girl, who was badly scared, and in feeling for her head, she seized the back of his hand in vice-like grip with her teeth. He opened his eyes quickly and freed himself in time to see the boy escaping. The preacher caught him by his knit suspenders and baptized him, although the urchin was saying all the time that he would "be darned" if he did, and other more profane expletives.

One day at a quarterly meeting, during the administration of the Lord's Supper, while all the local preachers and he and the elder were in the altar, Rev. Squash began noticing the feet of the other preachers and was trying to harmonize their ungainly dimensions and looks with the verse of Scripture which says how beautiful are the feet of those who preach, or words to that effect. The reflections were humorous and he was biting his lips to keep from laughing. It is a very difficult thing to keep from laughing on serious occasions when one gets tickled—everything distresses one to laugh. A hitch had occurred. Every preacher stole a glance to see what was the trouble. The elder was trying to remove the corn cob stopper from a large suspicious looking bottle. He was using a fancy pen knife and in a moment broke the blade. He then whispered to an old farmer-preacher for a knife and the countryman gave him a large knife. The elder tried to remove the stopper, but he could not, and an old codger offered his assistance, but the stopper was broken off and obdurate. Finally the stopper was pushed into the bottle. All this only aggravated Rev. Squash's

levity and he never partook the sacrament in a more unbecoming spirit. There happened to be an old grumbling member of his church present, who almost hated him, and during the sacrament Rev. Squash being nervous spilled a glass of wine on this old man's broadcloth clothes.

CHAPTER XVI.

Promotion and Kindred Changes.

Time does not change. It is forever and eternally the same. It is a distance—a circle we travel, passing perhaps the same starting point. We only are going onward in our journey and seeing different scenes. As we go farther on the road, we grow tired and weak and at last lay down to rest. We are not old. We have merely worn out our bodies in travel. We are the same—the same entity.

Rev. Squash served Successful Mission a quadrennium. He wrought faithfully the work given him and deserved promotion. He had accomplished much. He had built a fine church at Birdette and one or two more churches at other places. The obstacles he had overcome inured him to the hardest phases of ministerial life and the lessons learned developed his ability until he was a circuit rider of the first water. To us one of the most distressing features of the itinerancy was moving. We had lived at Birdette three years and ties and endearing bonds of friendship and familiarity had been formed and cemented until it was sad to sever the association and go into a land of strangers. In moving a family has to make sacrifices. Conveniences cannot often be moved. A Methodist preacher cannot accumulate much property—and he does not need to. With the most of them the increase is in the family.

Rev. Squash was appointed to the Henry Clay

Circuit, in a fertile agricultural section of the State, about sixty miles from where we were.

After itemizing children and live stock and packing chattels and bidding friends adieu, we took wagons for our new home. If ever when we moved it did not rain I do not remember it.

Father knew a man on the route and we spent the night with him—six Squashes, two teamsters, a dog, a cow and yearling and a calf and five horses—and the friend did not charge anything for keeping us, (for we did not ask him). That night Kurg, Os and myself slept in a trundle bed that was not large enough for a set of twins to sleep in without fighting—certainly we had a fight and it lasted nearly all night. The night was cold but too warm for Os who lay between Kurg and myself, and he pushed the cover back. Kurg and myself had to hold to keep in bed and then could not keep in all the time.

When we struck the macadamized road one wagon went back to Birdette. The other was from Henry Clay. We got to the town of Henry Clay late the following day. The parsonage, which was the nicest one we had ever lived in, had been rented out, and we had to take a vacant house adjacent until New Year.

Henry Clay Circuit was in another district—the Cedar district with Jim Pusheasy, P. E. The charge was composed of four churches—Henry Clay, Sweetwater, Quarrelsome Hall, and Claridon. The Squashes were out of their latitude, but they are a set who can easily adapt themselves to their surroundings. We were in a land of intelligence and wealth—the pro-

motion from a mountain grazing place to a clover meadow.

Although Birdette had a fine college and was the county site, the inhabitants were either of our class and our inferiors and a few who deigned it beneath them to notice us. We Squash children had not received much polish from society in Birdette.

Henry Clay was a flourishing up-to-date town. Everything moved off nicely. We spent four happy years at Henry Clay and during our stay two more Squashes were added to our family—a girl who was christened Malinda Louella and a boy, who was labeled Caleb Calhoun Christopher, an alliterative name of a spy, a statesman and a sailor.

Uncle Peter and Aunt Jemima made us a visit. Aunt J. had to osculate every one of us and I believe she would have kissed the dog—I would rather have kissed him than to kiss her.

“Do tell, Peter!” said she, “look how these dear children have growed—just like plants. Ah, that dear little Martha, she is so sweet! Come here, dearie! Ah, you surely have not forgotten Aunt Jemima already? Do you not remember how I used to carry you to see the little pigs and little chickens? Come on and see what I have for you. It is some nice popcorn candy I got at the show to-day.”

“Boys, ye ought ’er been with us to-day,” said Uncle Peter. “There was a sircuss in a town we came through and we stopped to see it and didn’t have to pay nuther.”

That announcement got the attention of us boys.

“What did you see, Uncle Peter?” I asked.

“Elephants and tigers and hyeners, and lions, and—”

“Lines! What is lines?” said Os.

“They are straight or crooked marks,” said Kurg.

“No, they ain’t, you gump. They are big animals, bigger than a horse.”

“Peter Squash! You know well better than that. They were about the size of a half-grown calf,” said Aunt Jemima.

“Shucks on, gentlemen, I bet five hundred thousand dollars to a Jew’s harp a lion is larger’n thet. I know they air—and thet settles it,” said Uncle Peter decidedly, taking a fresh quid of tobacco. “Boys, you ought ’er seen ’em.”

“Wus they dead?” asked Os.

“No; you fool! Do ye think they would be hauling around dead lions?”

I had reached that period of boyhood Uncle Peter pronounced “the sweet Marie fever” stage. I had a hankering desire to call to see the girls on Sunday afternoons, but I was so bashful that I would run out of the room if I could when I saw a girl coming. I wrote them notes at school and smiled sickly smiles at them and carried them apples and candy—or rather I would stand around and nibble an apple or a piece of candy until a girl would ask me for some, then I gave her all I had. Some times the very girl I did not want to have the gift was the one that asked me—and I never could refuse a girl. I gradually tamed before them and several—who had learned my nature—claimed me for their sweetheart and got all the presents I was able to secure. But I had different ideas and longed to go to

see the girl of my choice and take her my offerings and see her only enjoy them. My boy friends knew of my admiration, also my timidity—for a certain beautiful girl, and one Sunday afternoon they forged my name and wrote the girl a note, asking to call that evening. The young lady granted the request. I spent Sundays generally thus: I went to Sunday school and church in the forenoon. In the afternoon I joined companions—the gang of which there were several in the town—and we fought bumble bees, hornets and yellow jackets, or went fishing or swimming in the mill pond or went to the woods or some man's orchard—or watermelon patch. In the evening I went home and went to roost. I forgot to state that some times in the forenoon, after Sunday school I went to a Baptist's orchard (the father of this certain young lady)—because the Baptists held their Sunday school later than we did. The first I knew of the engagement with the young lady a friend gave me her note of acceptance. I had been fighting bumble bees, and it had begun to mizzle, running me to shelter. I read the note and told him I could not go. “You must,” he urged. “That fellow who goes to see her comes out here from Sweetwater every Sunday, and we don't like it, so we detained his messenger to-day and wrote a card and signed your name to it.”

“I will treat that fellow in no such a manner, neither will I be treated that way. I never did call to see a girl,” I said earnestly.

“No; that will never, never do. You will get some of your best friends into trouble. Joab, you will go, will you not? It makes no difference if it is the first

time. You have to start some time. I know you like the girl and say, she likes you very much. I have heard her speak often of how well she likes you and would like to be with you. It will not be mistreating that fellow."

"Well, I will go," I promised, and I hastened home. I laid the matter before my mother and she bade me prepare myself. I washed my neck and ears, the first time since mother had left the job to me, except when I went bathing in the creek—and gave my hands a scrubbing, and blacked my shoes, and tried to comb my hair. I had never worn a collar and cravat. I did not own any. I got some of father's discarded neck toggery, which was too large. I went down town and looked at the boys who were in the habit of being in female company, then viewed my appearance in the plate glass windows of a store. I was not satisfied and I went home and made what additional changes I could. I was restless and uneasy. What if the girl found out how matters were and sent me word that I need not come—well, I would whip the boys who wrote the card and signed my name to it. I asked mother what to say to the girl. She told me to say almost anything that suggested itself. I went to the barn and thought out some suggestions and memorized me a speech. I wanted about a sackful of suggestions on the subject about that time and I wished Uncle Peter was there to help me. I went to mother again and asked her how had father done when he called to see her. She said that it had been so long she had quite forgotten. That evening it grew dark early on account of the fog. I arrived at my lady love's home in advance of the usual time for

calling and was ushered into the family room, where I had to chat her father and invalid brother. The girl's mother was dead and she was housekeeper. I heard some one washing dishes. I was greatly terrified at the presence of her father. It seemed to me that he read the innermost secrets of my soul, and objected to my coming to see his daughter. Father had had to steal his wife and I thought all fathers with daughters were stern and forbidding—I have learned since that some are inviting. I sat in misery. Cold chills ran up and down my spinal column. If I could have escaped without notice, I would have. Shortly I heard a light made in the parlor and a fire began to roar, and then a mellow voice say:

“Mr. Squash, come into the other room.”

I had never been styled “Mr. Squash” before, and I naturally thought at first that father was present, and the fact of my coming to see the girl was made known to her father! Her brother seemed to have thought that I had come to see him—I wish I had, and I was going to let it pass for that. How I crossed the room is more than I can tell.

The young lady was a charming conversationalist, and as my speech had forsaken me, I listened to her like a dumb idiot.

Talking afeer a bit was at par, then at a premium and in a short time out of sight. We sat for some time very silent and doleful. I sought to relieve the oppression as part of my speech was returning to me. When I spoke it was in a treble key one second and a deep bass the next, then running the entire gamut—and at last I lost my voice. I had caught cold (on account of the washing and scrub-

bing I suppose) and beside I was undergoing a change in voice. The young lady could not refrain from laughing.

“I cannot talk. I have caught cold and lost my voice,” I gurgled. I could not speak at all after that. I allowed water would restore my voice, and as I could not talk I made signs. She misunderstood me and stepped to the organ and played every love ditty she knew. I was angry and started to go home, and got to the hallway. It was raining hard. I saw a bucket of water though and I took a copious draught. I regained my voice and stayed until the shower slackened, then I went home, vowing never to go to see another girl so long as I lived. It was not as I had dreamed.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ravelings.

This chapter is to be read or skipped. It is composed of ends and bits. I have reached a point in this history where there is a disconnection I cannot escape. While a few chapters back the balls were many and tangled. I have come to a number of ravelings, which I have to inculcate before I can reach the longer and regular threads. Besides, a preacher's life is rather monotonous in details. It is a routine career in the main. The wheel of circumstances turns him off at this place a season and that place awhile. But few new conditions are met. New faces and places become old in a short time. Old sermons, the same duties, the same demands, the same problems, are repeated over and over. He attempts variety, but falls into the oft trodden paths. The work is often done in a perfunctory way. In writing a history of an average preacher, after the principal facts are given, nothing but minor incidents and accidents remain. This treatise does not concern solely the preacher's lot and mission; it deals with the other inmates of the family and their experiences. I have been guilty of writing a good deal about my own importance, already, but I cannot promise to quit. If I do not speak for myself I do not know who will. The first advice in writing a history that was given me, was: do not try to tell anything you do not know. I know more about myself—mind, when I am speaking of myself—than I do of others. Who

should come to see us at this time but our old-time friend, the talented Dooks.

He was a talented young preacher. He had affected great learning and manners. He wore a derby hat, a flaring red cravat, and celluloid collar and cuffs, and a ten-cent pair of spectacles. His garb otherwise was simple and becoming.

Uncle Peter and Brother Dooks were soon at variance. Uncle Peter detested Dook's high-flown language and lofty manners. "Young brother, it seems ye air not old enough to wear specks! why do ye wear 'em, ef I mayn't be so inquisitive?" interrogated Uncle Peter.

"You are pardonable, certainly," replied Dooks, glancing over the eye-glasses condescendingly. "I have astigmatism of the eyes."

"What did he say wuz the matter with his eyes, Ike?" asked Uncle Peter.

"He said that he had a stick in his eyes," said father blandly.

"Humph!" ejaculated Uncle Peter, and he pushed his hat down on his head and went out of the room to the barn. He got into the crib and began shucking corn. He had to stand up to pull down some corn and while thus occupied a hungry cow stuck her head into the door unobserved. When Uncle Peter sat down he sat on the cow's head. The cow was frightened and tried to withdraw her head, but her horns were fastened to Uncle Peter's rear. She surged and he vainly sought to relieve himself of the "horn of the dilemma"—only that is not exactly what I understood him to say. Both man and beast were released by a rip and tear of cloth—and the scared cow went

around the corner with a piece of thick cloth the same color as Uncle Peter's pants, dangling from her horns, and Uncle Peter went to the house with his hat held behind him.

Dooks had come to assist in a revival at a neighboring school house. The meeting had been in progress several days. Dooks was an entire stranger in the community. He preached the first night after his arrival, before he had been informed "of the lay of the land." He made a stirring appeal to the sinners and extended an invitation for them to come to the altar. None came. Rev. Squash arose and roasted the members of the church and ordered them to go into the audience and talk with their friends. Only one did so—a lazy fellow—who fell upon his knees beside the nearest man to him, who was his red-headed brother-in-law. In a short while, Dooks marched down into the altar and exhorted the sinners again to come and be prayed for. The only church member who had moved, who either thought he was doing no good with his relative or misunderstood the proposition, came down the aisle. Dooks met him and marched him into the altar and called the church in and prayed for him. That was encouraging. The next day a real sinner was captured. He lay prone upon his stomach with his face buried in the straw. The day was very sultry and some women were fanning the prostrated man.

"Do not do that, sisters," said Dooks who believed in the "sweating process." The church was called around the poor man and prayers were offered. Martha Squash was with them in the altar. "Little sister,

you pray," said Dook. Martha began, "O Lord, please send the fire down upon this man, and—"

The man wanted anything but fire and he straightened up and walked out of the house, caught his mule and went home, and was converted before he got there.

The meeting continued. One afternoon I carried a girl to preaching in an old road cart. On the way home we met a donkey. The horse I was driving played shy of it, whereupon the young lady said: "I can hardly blame a horse for being scared at a donkey, one is so frightful looking. A few years ago I was badly scared at one."

"Ah!" I said, "they are very tame. Did you not know so at that time?"

"No; that was before I knew there were two kinds," and she hastily added—"tame ones and wild ones."

I thought she was in love with me because of the crimson blush which mantled her cheek. I was so encouraged that I escorted her to a social function that evening and spent my last ten cents for ice cream, and then did not get to talk with her. Some of the girls present were strangers. I met them when I first came. I noticed a beautiful girl sitting alone and I made my way to her side. I talked to her pleasantly and even lovingly—I talked to all of them that way. She seemed pleased and smiled, and I talked the more. The girl I had come with tapped me on the shoulder and said that she had to go home.

On the way she said: "You seemed to like Miss Lyon very much, but how did you talk to her?"

"Why?" I asked in amazement. "She is one of the most entertaining girls I know."

"Undoubtedly; but she is deaf and dumb."

CHAPTER XVIII.

School Incidents.

Kurg and Os and myself had a host of running mates at Henry Clay. Among the most intimate were a red-headed, freckled-faced boy named Stinger Knott and a cock-eyed, long-legged youth named Gomer Squiques. In the way of mischief what we would not do, is not worth telling, and a good deal of it would not do to tell. At school we were the embodiment of trouble. If we were not fighting ourselves we were agitating war between others. We were invariably suspected of every misdeed in school and in town, but conviction was well nigh impossible. Verily "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." We were not desperate characters, but because almost everyone gave us a bad name we did not hesitate to sustain our reputation. We Squash children did not possess all the prerequisite text-books and the books we carried to school were left in our desks every night. To while away our time we resorted to various and sundry intrigues. At recitation we surreptitiously had good lessons. I saw that the teacher often consulted a certain book and seemed particularly selfish with it. At noon I purloined it one day and took it home with me. It was a book to be fond of. It contained solution of every problem we had to contend with. After that my advancement in arithmetic was rapid—for I borrowed the book each day without asking the teacher, and sometimes

copied the lessons for a week ahead. Of course I was careful not to be verbatim and now and then I would miss a sum purposely—but I would have it the next time by “hard study.” I was held up as a model student by the teacher who said that he never had seen a boy so good in figures in his life as I was. One thing is certain, I never studied—my books. I was accused of being precocious, but I deny the charge. The only way I can account for how I really ever learned anything, is, I listened closely to every recitation and tried to answer the questions in my mind before the pupils did. In this way I studied the lessons and when I was advanced to higher classes I already knew the lessons. Anyway I absorbed a considerable amount of valuable instruction which a retentive mind held. Another source of help was helping other pupils prepare their lessons. To please a teacher, have good lessons. Kurg and Os also “increased in knowledge and understanding,” but they applied themselves more to having fun than they did to “making bricks and mortar.”

One day we had a substitute teacher. Before the day closed he was made to lose his temper and his high estimate of the profession and his qualifications. In a spelling class definitions had to be given. Kurg was given the word manna. In a sing-song tone he said: “M-a-n man, n-a na, manna, a food miraculously prepared for the Israelites by God.”

The young teacher’s eyes gleamed wrathfully. The next word was epoch. The teacher looked at it long before attempting to pronounce it. The girl to whom it was given missed it and so did the boy below her and on down the line was the word misspelled until

it came to Os who was in his accustomed place—at the foot of the class.

“E-poch,” the teacher said in stentorian voice.

“Efoc? E-f-o-c, efoc,” spelled Os in equal compass of tone.

“No; the word is e-poch—a remarkable period of time,” said the teacher.

“E-p-o-c-h,” spelled Os, remembering the definition.

“Mister teacher,” I called out from my seat, “if you please, I believe that word is called ep-och.”

“What is the matter, Stinger Knott?” asked the teacher of my friend, who was sawing on his red hair with a dull bladed Barlow, ignoring my correction.

“I am trying to cut the wax out of my hair where Joab Squash put it,” said he frankly.

“He put wax in my hair first,” I said without being requested to speak, my cheeks blazing because of the expose.

“Stinger you and Mr. Squash leave and do not present yourselves again until you look like young men should and can act like gentlemen instead of little boys.”

Those words mortified me and a desire to crush him in the future rankled in my breast. Stinger and myself left the house and went to my home. We were guilty of indiscretion and the teacher’s reproof made us feel how unbecoming to boys of our size the offence was—and we both were angry. I proposed hostilities in settlement of our differences and the atonement for my shame, and that I could whip any red-headed zany who did not have sense enough not to tell on a fellow. I had put more wax in his hair

than he had mine, and I was the oldest and largest boy. Stinger took the epithets gracefully and declined to accept a duel, but instead offered to repair my hair if I would fix his. I consented. I slipped father's razor and a pair of scissors. The net result was this, there were three bare spots on my head and five bald places on Stinger's head, the size of that number of silver dollars. The bare spots showed well in the red hair. We laughed at each other and decided to look more ridiculous—and we shaved off our eye-brows. We did not return to school until noon. Just as we turned the corner of the school house some one began throwing clay balls at us. I was hit in the eye the first volley and Stinger got a mouth full the next. We began firing at any and everybody we could see. The soft missiles came from all directions. Had the school mutinied? We knew not. Gomer Squiques, Kurg and Os joined us and they had plenty of ammunition—small yellow tomatoes. We were in the school building by this time and were routing the foe and all in our way. Some of the larger boys were in the house studying their lessons. Not seeing an enemy I threw a tomato at a well-dressed, very ugly boy who was poring over his Caesar. The aim was true—the tomato hit him in the forehead and the seed bespattered his immaculate shirt front. Now, the opposition were upon us, and at close range clay and tomatoes flew thick and fast. I glanced about and there stood the assistant teacher looking at us. I fell out of line of battle. The principal of the school was at his post in the afternoon—the substitute having succumbed and fled. A woman talks too much—that assistant did!

The first thing on the program "at books" was an investigation. Nearly every boy in school was called to the platform. The girls had been in the battle too, but the old maid teacher had not told on them—the sympathy of her sex for the delinquent girls! The teacher proceeded to administer punishment without trial. Two large benches were put together and four of us largest boys ordered to lie down and the rest were stacked upon us until the pile reached the ceiling, and the school was invited to come and look at us. I scrambled to the top. It was a scene of tears and laughs. That was not all. Every one had to kiss where he had hit with a tomato. I vainly sought for an excuse. I concluded to risk the ugly boy not prosecuting the case, so I remained silent. Telling a lie would not do. I was asked if I had hit anyone with tomatoes. Only one tomato I had thrown had struck the mark as I knew and "tomatoes" were plural—thanks to my knowledge of grammar—so I said no. The other boys told that they had been hit on the sleeve or hand—so we all escaped. The teacher prohibited the boys from chewing paper into wads and throwing it on the ceiling. Gomer Squiques was caught in the act and had "to stay in" at recess. He was Kurg's deskmate and boon companion, and Kurg deliberately threw a wad of paper upward, so he could keep Gomer company, but the teacher kept him in at dinner.

Our substitute teacher was at the helm again ere long and I began scheming revenge. Passing notes between girls and boys was not permitted—but that increased the business. I wrote a note and took no pains to land it safely. It whirled across the room

and the teacher saw it fall. He walked back to where it fell, wearing a sinister smile. Picking up the note he mounted the platform and said: "We have intercepted a billet doux and we shall read it publicly, so as to know its contents and learn its author," but he never read it. It contained this line, "Pass to the next biggest fool."

CHAPTER XIX.

An Unlucky Chapter.

Uncle Peter and myself attended a Sunday school convention held in a near-by town. I was a delegate and Uncle Peter was a visitor. I did not know but one man in the town and he belonged to the upper crust of society. He asked Uncle Peter and myself home with him to take dinner and we went—but I wish we had not gone. Neither of us knew what to do. Uncle Peter mired up in the carpets so deeply that he was afraid to move and he stood there like the countryman he was, expecting to be ordered off of the place. He took a chair when invited and sunk almost out of sight. He looked so out of place that I forgot my own discomfort and sniggered. The other guests were fashionable folk and seemed perfectly at ease. At the table the fun began. It was more and different “fighting” from what I was acquainted with. The dinner was served in courses. Both Uncle Peter and myself were used to having the victuals on the table before us, but at this place all the table had on it was decorations and empty dishes. Each one had a plate in a plate—oyster soup was the first course. We thought a rich man should have more than this to eat. We were hungry and ate our soup. Then we tilted back our chairs, took a toothpick, and waited to leave the table. But no one left and another course appeared. It was substantial food this time. We were not acquainted with “second blessings” but, as we were hungry still, we renewed

the attack. When we finished we pushed back again—we were certain dinner was over, for we were satisfied. Another course arrived. It was with embarrassment we resumed our position. We ate this whether we wanted it or not. We kept our place. A small pup got into the dining room and came and barked at me—I felt that I was worthy of the honor. An editor on my right said, “Mr. Squash, the pup has treed.”

“If he was an o’possum dog he would have bayed on my right,” I ventured in repartee, but no one smiled even.

Another course! When would this end! I had a cargo already, but “sink or swim, survive or perish” I pushed all I could down the inside of my neck. Another course—“the best for the last,” said the hostess, “and if you all do not eat it and like it I shall be insulted.” I would not have insulted her for Uncle Peter’s farm, which was so poor that ten drunken men could not raise a fuss on it, and tried to dispose of the food. Whether I was running over or badly excited I do not know, but I dropped a large piece of the slick, quivering stuff in my bosom. I had on one of father’s stiff-bosomed shirts. I was already profusely perspiring, but I buttoned my coat from Alpha to Omega. Then, dinner was over. I was thankful. I was full—“too full for utterance.” “Yea, my cup runneth over!” While the other guests were drinking and using tooth-brushes, and Uncle Peter was wiping or licking his false teeth, I leaned against a post on the back veranda and was seized with a fit of “coughing,” while I got that unknown and not wanted mess off of fath-

er's shirt breast. I heard a chuckle over my shoulder. It came from the editor. He sarcastically asked what was the matter (next week's issue of his paper had a reference to the incident). Uncle Peter and I took cigars and took our departure at once. We were walking. Uncle Peter had guilelessly undergone the dinner with many mistakes to his credit, but much elation to himself.

"They shore air clever people," said he. "See what a nice handkerchief the lady gave me, beside thet fine dinner. I am proud of the present," and he flourished a damask linen napkin. "But, Joab," he continued, "shucks on, gentlemen, if I ain't a lee-tle onpleasantly full. I et too many dinners and I feel like I am about to pip. I wonder ef they eat thet many dinners often. I rec'on they jist wanted to show their fine dishes and thet they could afford so much good eating. It wus a regular weddin' dinner. Joab, try to be rich and liberal. Ef you can't work fer it, talk fer it—marry some rich girl. I predict they kin be talked into it, beside I have he'rn of sich. Somehow or tother, I allus loved a pore woman and a pore woman loved me, but I often wish I had loved a rich woman."

I made him my confidante and told him the yearnings of my heart.

"Wael, ye don't know much erbout the women tribe jist now. Thet's sartin, but ye will larn I'm thinkin'. I heve had much experience with 'em and I kin give ye some secrets," said the old man trustingly. The next day, while riding the gray mare to water, Uncle Peter stopped to confabulate with a man who was trying to interest Uncle Peter in a hog chol-

era enterprise. They were before a store, and several empty barrels and boxes were near them. Uncle Peter was sitting with one leg thrown over the pommel of his saddle, while our yellow dog sat snapping at gnats close by. Along came a negro, driving a hog with a rope to its hind leg. Just as he got near Uncle Peter, the hog ran under the old mare and she turned, and the hog, negro, and mare were soon spinning around and around, squealing, grunting and kicking. A barrel rolled into the melee and Uncle Peter was thrown skyward and lighted head foremost in a barrel. The other man was knocked down. The old mare made salmagundi out of boxes and barrels with her heels and at last left the fallen and wounded and disappeared down the street. Uncle Peter limped to the parsonage and ordered Aunt Jemima to get ready to go home the very next day.

Sister Martha and myself accompanied them home for a visit. Sister Martha drank a glass of starch one day while we were gone, thinking it was butter-milk.

Uncle Peter said, "The blamed ijot will be stiffen as stiff as a door nail if she ain't doctored and be as proud as a peacock the rest of her life. Give her some dynamite or saltpetre or something. She ain't fitten fer the North Pole or a cemetery already." But Uncle Peter's drastic remedies were not used. Aunt Jemima gave her a copperas pill about the size of a small egg and a handful of Epsom salts, and she recovered.

CHAPTER XX.

Uncle Peter's Lecture on Women.

Uncle Peter delivered me a lecture on women and as it was a masterpiece, I will give it to my readers. He carried me from the house quite a distance, so as not to be within earshot—of a woman—as if his opinions on woman were a great secret. In his inimitable way, he began: “Joab, ye’re a colt yit on the outside of the fence. Of course ye heve reached over a leetle now and then and got a taste, but ye heve not seed much. Some of these days ye will jump over at some broken place, and ye will jump back on the outside, and then ye will wait and jump again and stay over this time I guess. But ye will larn I am thinkin’ fer I think ye kin ‘connect to’ purty well fer a young un. I tell ye to yer face thet I ’spect ye air a diamond in the rough. Ye heve a future before ye. Ye air a preecher’s son and ye will be throwed in society of wimmen and as ye heven’t an’ I am concerned erbout yer happiness, I will tell ye some things it would take ye years to larn. Wimmen peeple air a strange set. They air almost prezactly everything a man is not. The very furst thing a man ought ’er know is hissself and other men. Study human nater’. Ye will generally find a man straightforward, open, and plain when ye heve eny transactions with him. He will tell ye whut he’ll do or not do, at once, nearly every time, but a woman won’t. She has to talk and think the matter over meny times before she decides whut she will do. A woman looks at everything jist oppo-

site from the way a man does, and convince a woman against her will and she is—the same woman still. Wimmen air weaker'n men in every respect, not thet thare ain't some wimmen stronger'n some men, fer thare air some very weak men, but considerin' the whole cahoot, men air the strongest. But, son, the weak things of this world kin confound the mighty, the Book says, and I tell ye a woman is a good fighter. She has some good weapons and she allus looks out fer her own interests. She kin take a eyeful of tears, and a mouthful of sweet talk, and a faceful of smiles, and jist lay her purty little hand on yer shoulder, and ask ye to do enything, and ye will think of yer mother and do whut she askt, if ye heve got a heart at all. A woman shore has got influence. She kin lead the most of men eround jist like ye would a calf. Wael, let her think she is leadin' ye, but, Joab, ye must keep yer eyes open and find out where she is agoin' with ye and not let her know it and if it don't suit ye, jist tell her ye know her game and break away from her and turn the table on her if ye like.

“I hate to see a feller so puddin'-headed as to be worked as ef he wus a horse and had to. Of course a man ought 'er treat a woman fair and square, but he ought'n to treat her like she wus an angul or a kanary burd or a tender plant. Ef he does, he is a lightening-bug sort of a man, and a woman of good sense has no use fer him, but to make him wait on her, to keep him from pesterin' her.

“A woman is a trustin' critter and she likes a man with strength and courage, who is honest and trustworthy, to depend upon. When a woman quits trustin' in men she has been disappointed and will be an

old maid, if she ain't already merried before she quits. Do not let her know too much no matter how well ye know her, but let her think she knows all. She is credulous when she once gits to beleevving, whether it is good or bad. Ef ye let her know too much she will change tactics fer she kin not and will not stay in the same notion all the time.

“Wimmen air deceitful beings—but I don't blame 'em every time. 'Tain't right fer a woman to be made to tell where she stands in everything and ef she has to deceeve to keep from it, it is all right with me. I blame 'em when they air defendin' themselves and air actin' they air something they air not, fer some selfish and hidden motive. Ef the motive is right I kin excuse 'em more, but when it is pure hypocrisy and insincerity I hate it. She takes advantage of a man jist like she wus not a-thinkin' of him.

“Wimmen's silence is their best way of deducting and forming opinion. They know how impulsive a man is and they jist keep quiet and let him go until they know all they want to know erbout him.

“A woman keeps ye from knowin' whut she intends doin' as long as she kin, in almost all things, and she will do nearly enything to keep ye from findin' out—but she wants a man to wheedle eround and try to find out.

“A woman makes a man feel he has acted the fool, and he generally has. She does it on purpose. She is jist jedging him.

“Her much talkin' is fer pastime and selfish motives. She is tryin' to throw ye off of her track.

“When she intimates she has diskivered ye in a sin

of 'omission or commission', jist tell her whut ye know. Thet quits her quick."

"Wimmen air as vain as peacocks, and they love purty things, and nice things, and little trifling things a man don't, and is apt to smash or tear up ef he gits in ten feet of 'em. They love to make a show and everyone tries to outrival the tother. I tell ye the peeple who set the styles fer sale know this. Thet is the reason they heve got the wimmen to thinkin' they all heve got to buy their hats at the same time, fer every woman wants the purtiest and costliest hat in the kentry. The very idea of all the men a waitin' to buy their hats all at one time! A woman likes to spend money. Jist put her in a store and tell her to git whut she wants and, ef she ain't as nigh the promise land as she wants to be jist then, I'll eat my old hat. Ef she knows the value of money she will do to trust, but ef she don't, keep yer pocketbook from her.

"A woman likes to visit. Two of them kin do more talkin'—except a crowd of them—than ten men, and nuthin's been said after they git through—I mean quit. I remember when I wus a boy I wus sickly one year and laid eround the house, and listened to the wimmen talk. They love to talk. They talk erbout nigh everything and everybody. They don't talk to men like they do to each other. The quietest woman ye know is a chirper ef ye jist kin git eround and her not know it and hear her.

"There air all kinds of wimmen—good and bad, purty and ugly, and rich and pore. The question is how ye air goin' to be able to tell the jenuwine from the counterfeit. A feller wants to be suited with a

woman and ef he gits the wrong one he is wurse off'n ef he got none.

“Woman is a mighty fine burd and she is useful as well as ornamental. I do not see how man could do without her. But she must be kept in her place, and thet is, the home. I don't mind her workin' fer herself, but I want her to be in a woman's place instead of a man's. She ain't no bizness votin' and the like.

“I beleve in merriage and think a young feller ought 'er git him a good wife as soon as he needs one and kin take care of her. But be sure to git the right one. Don't go on looks so much, but take her merits. To git a good woman a man must be a good jedge of a horse and be a good trader. Wimmen air very much like horses enyway. Don't take the one thet is easiest to git and everybody wants ye to take. She's a plug nine times out of ten. It's strictly yer bizness and nobody else's. Try to find one thet is hard to win—thet kind is a bargain nearly every time. The better the woman is ye fool, the better a trade ye've made. Joab, the thing fer ye to do is, wait to merry, but go with eny gurl ye like and study 'em powerfully hard, allus havin' in mind the kind of a wife ye need and want. A good idea is to try to win every gurl ye think would suit ye, but be kereful not to go too fur. Ef ye find one thet pleases ye, when ye air old enough and able to merry, win her ef ye kin. Ef ye don't want to merry a gurl, be friends and treat her right. But the gurls will try to make ye think they love ye when they don't. They air jist wantin' ye to spend money on them and give 'em a pleasant time. The gurl thet loves ye will not let ye know it fer a long time. P'raps, ye want to know how to win a gurl of

yer choice. I will tell ye. Be honest and secure her confidence. Confess and prove yer love fer her. Ef she looks a leetle skeered and can't look at ye much straight, strike when the iron is hot. Jist grab her in yer arms and kiss her. She will play mad, but love her until ye know whether she is mad or not. Ef she loves ye she wants to be loved, and ef she don't ye'll know it. Tell her the fiftieth time how ye love her and she is the sweetest gurl livin' and thet ye'd be happy with her and ye want nobody but her fer yer own. Tell her ye think she is a smart gurl, too. It'll take time and patience to do this and ye must use yer brains. Be constant and faithful and in a short time she is yers ef she is goin' to be. Be independent and firm and go on yer merits. Ef ye find she is the one fer ye, be engaged, but never commit yerself until ye air sure of it and sure of yer own feelings. When ye feel sheepish, and restless, and unworthy, and foolish, ye air in love. Make the probationary stage long enough fer ye to understand yerself and her and study out the future. Ef everything is well and ye air ready, take her, fer she is 'the pearl of great price.' ''

CHAPTER XXI.

Uncle Peter's Philosophy.

Philosophy seemed to be a fascination with Uncle Peter. His quaint logic, per se, without knowing him, perchance does not carry conviction with it—but when given to me was duly appreciated, because I knew he meant well and deserved my respect. He was a man of years and trials and I was in my callow boyhood—hence I listened to him. I treasure much of his advice. While he was not educated, he thought on most all problems and issues of the day, and applied his reasoning whenever he thought it would help him. He was often mistaken, but the most of his reasoning was lucid and tangible. I was entertained on long evenings, listening to him trying to explain some complex or unreasonable question. There seemed to be two abstruse quiries which baffled his ability to answer. They were, why a jackass brayed and a cock crew. He could see no purpose in either and scarcely any necessity for such vocal exertion.

“Shucks on, gentlemen! I rec'on an ass jist can't help it. I know it nearly kills him,” said Uncle Peter. Apparently the ass delays the painful duty until he is compelled to obey the inflexible demands of his stubborn nature. Ostensibly he does not bray because of vanity, for wherewithal could he be vain, as he is not guilty of possessing that sense or any admirable qualities to be elated over, not even his voice. There is no harmony, congruity or melody in his speech. It is doubtful whether he understands the

modus operandi of braying. He makes a dismal failure at any reasonable use of voice. It can but be an enormous expenditure of energy and lung tissue which his stupidity must admit he fain would desist in the pleasure if he could.

“It is the nature of the brute to bray, Peter, and that is reason enough,” said Aunt Jemima.

“Shucks on, I know it, but thet is no reason. I want to know why he brays. Every animal in the universe, except him, uses their voice fer some use or purpose. A dog barks at an object or from fright. A horse neighs when he is skeered or lonesome. A cow lows because of danger or she is sick. A burd sings, a parrot talks, and every being but him gits pleasure out of their voice and to talk with each other, but an ass does not bray fer any cause or reason.”

It is true he does not bray to give warning or on account of excitement for he is not influenced by fear or slander. He brays at all unreasonable hours. Often when he is enjoying the bliss of a nap the fit seizes him and he is thrown into convulsions and throes which render him almost unconscious. He loses his breath and regains it with difficulty and before he recovers sufficiently, the paroxysms are renewed. Braying gives him pain instead of pleasure—the epiglottis is strained to the bursting point and the vocal apparatus is torn nearly to pieces. He is not eliciting company, for company only adds volume to the noise. I cannot tell why he brays unless it is as Uncle Peter says: “He jist can’t help it.” It seems to be a vent of pent up pain—a sneeze prolonged and reversed and continued until the poor animal is overcome.

“And the cock,” said Uncle Peter, “has no sense in his crow. It is pure vanity and nuthin’ else. It is useless. It may be his accomplishment, but it ain’t a song, or a warning or call to enybody fer anything.”

A cock’s crow, when one thinks of it, is irregular, inconsistent with time and place, undeserving, deceiving, and a hoax and banter, pure and simple. He has no consideration for your rest or that of his own family. At any hour of the night he splits his throat in answer to some neighbor chanticleer. It is a game of who crows last. He mounts the fence or your doorsteps with gusto, flaps his wings, and shouts until the fatigue overpowers him. A young cock almost suffocates himself to learn the art of crowing. He attempts the notes, runs the scale, with stretched neck, ruffled feathers, eyes protruding from their sockets, and blood bursting nearly every vein—and fails. Laughter and derision greet his ears from relatives and enemies, but he is not crestfallen. He is ambitious and hies to some quiet spot with admiring friends and makes another effort. After many trials and patient and persistent attempts, he is “a cock of the walk”, strutting in his dignity and conceit—which probably costs him his life—crowing lustily and everlastingly. He crows on all occasions where he may plume his triumphs or parade his virtues. According to Uncle Peter the ass and cock have human prototypes. “Shucks on, Joab, thare air a whole lot of humans like them two beings. Ye will see the feller with the least sense a hollerin’ the loudest in everything and he don’t know why he is doin’ it. I guess he jist kin’t help it. And ye will see these leetle dandies, who think they air all of it, a braggin’ eround

and a struttin'. Both kind air in the way and air a nuisance to the public welfare," commented Uncle Peter. "Talkin' erbout animules," said Uncle Peter, "I tell ye a goat's got more sense than most peeple gives him credit fer. Some folks think his smell in all the sense he's got. A goat is almost a human. He will depend upon hisself and he kin bear hardships. I butchered one once, but ef the Lord'll fergive me I'll never slay another'n. It wus a pet goat thet wus agittin' too bad erbout buttin'. He got behind a Methodist preecher one day and pushed him from the front gate clear under the house, and my furst wife, who wus a terrible Methodist, tormented me until I killed the goat.

"Ye know ye heve to kill 'em alive and skin 'em with 'em lookin' at yet do it. Thet goat had plenty of knowledge and he seemed to know whut I meant to do with him when I hung him up by the hind legs to a limb on an apple tree. He looked so pitiful and pleadin'-like out of his big, soft, gray eyes my heart almost failed me—but I cut his throat. Since I wus born I never he'rn the like. Thet goat talked, cussed, prayed and sung jist as plain as ef it had been a human. It said: 'Don't kill me—oh, Lordy, don't! Whut heve I done? Oh! oh! oh! Damn it, quit! Oh, Lordy! Oh! oh! Lord, heve mercy! Bah, oh, oh, ah, ha, oh!' 'There is a land thet is fairer than day,' and he went on thet way until he died. He seemed skeered at furst, then got mad, and finally resigned to his fate. I kin hear thet goat yit sometimes. It jist skeers enything to death to die."

CHAPTER XXII.

In Evil Paths.

When I came home from Uncle Peter's I resolved to put his precepts into practice. I called to see the girl of my choice. I thought that I was the only one with her, but, lo! I learned that my place in her heart had been usurped by another in my absence, and he was my brother Kurg. It was bad enough to have been beaten, but when the rival was my brother, it was hard to bear. At home life became miserable. Every member of the family laughed at me. Kurg spared no pains to let me know how he was progressing. Jealous rage filled my heart. I tried to overcome my feelings, but it was impossible. I lost appetite and pined. I did not attempt a race with Kurg and gave him a clear field. My falling in love was like my putting out poison for rats. I killed all the cats on the place. I always loved a girl who did not love me. In course of time my jilted heart again left its moorings and anchored my affections at the feet and shrine of one, Miss Sallie Flint. She was my senior by two years and my superior in every respect. She was worthy of the admiration of any man, both as to looks and graces. I composed the following apostrophe on the woman of my heart:

“Woman-angel! whom all adore. Thy azure-colored eyes, two liquid orbs of blue, melt the heart of man, win his admiration who hast a soul. Thy rose-tinted cheeks that grow riotous as a rosebed at the approach of an early morning's sun, when I stand in

thy matchless presence—so full of blushes they are—but make me the happiest of mortals, for they are for me. Those lips, half-parted, ready to speak, but lingering to let the countenance speak for them—luscious, ruby-red, rich and sweet—ravish my heart. Aye, let me repeat, those eyes, the index of the soul, in them I see Cupid's darts, both the raised arrows to send forth to assault, to gather in victory for thyself, and the shafts which have been winged home—the fatal spot, your heart! Those tender looks, like beams of effulgent and radiant power, are they for me—or for another? Or are they but nature? If for me I am happy, happy as an angel upon whose sun-lighted face the Prince of Glory shines! If for another, may never again I see thy face, but let me hide from sight of man, to die, to forget—no, I could not forget! If thy nature, then I worship thee—deny not me the right, since fain I wouldst die for thee if needs be that I should save thee! Thy smiles—unlike the bursting, glorious sun-rise through the clouds, roseate, scintillating, glowing; unlike the happy, healthful manifestations of mirth and pleasure—like the reflection of a fair face, divine, in a golden mirror, soulful, heartfelt, lovely, potent, bewitching, the echoes of the heart, the love thou hast for those thou smilest upon—are convincing battallions which tear down the bulwarks of my heart as no feminine strategy couldst do. I am held spellbound, speechless, a hopeless prisoner, as a poor candlefly in the glare of the beautiful flame, in thy presence—a loving admirer. Heaven pause and bestow thy choicest blessings upon this fair woman's head, crown her noble brow with health, and lead her through life as she hast begun—

a pure, virtuous, beautiful, noble, honest, sincere woman,"

But my gushing protestations of love irritated her. She wished to treat me kindly, but did not wish to encourage me. She was candid with me and vowed her friendship. Before I knew whether to quit or renew my pleadings the sky-pilot was called to steer another charge for the year, the time limit having expired at Henry Clay. We moved to a town named Rocque, which was situated on the banks of a large river. Miss Flint and myself agreed to correspond, but we could not keep from quarreling, so we quit—I had to quit because she quit.

About this time I secured a government position in the town. One warm day a friend and myself went to a larger town and we drank some kind of a hot flavored fluid, which made me feel rich, smart, and—sick. When I came home I wobbled in my legs—I was so weak, I suppose. I picked up Caleb C. C. and threw him up and did not try to catch him, but fortunately he fell upon the bed. “Hello, old man!” I addressed father. “How are you, sir?” and fell to the floor. I do not remember it very well. They say that the surprised and grieved household gathered around me and that father asked me what ailed me and that I told him I had received a sunstroke that day, I supposed. I remember having seen mother wiping her eyes and hearing father talking very sternly—and then I got sicker. Also, they told on me that on the way home I got in the buggy with a stranger whom I mistook for Miss Flint’s brother-in-law, and that I evacuated the secrets of my heart to him (and the contents of my stomach in his buggy), and when he denied being her

relative I wanted to engage him in combat. Anyway, because I was a preacher's son (I had gone to town with the son of a prominent church member), the news of my brief but severe illness was widely scattered. Certainly, I could not deny having been sick, and I wished the people to accept the fact and hush. But they would not and, as I had reached my majority a short time before, I grew impatient with them and went to town the next week and got 'sick' again—and came back and told everybody I had had a 'relapse'. I blush to speak of my many 'spells of sickness' during the year, but I did not enjoy very good "health". Kurg, too, was "sick" a good deal of the time. In fact it was an unhealthy place—to morals. Nearly every one seemed to like me, and the "invalids" of the place were in the ascendency, so I continued in my station.

Miss Flint and one of our relatives gave us a visit. Sallie had not been at our house two days before I fell a victim to heart flirtation as Uncle Peter had predicted, and she and I got at a better understanding than we had ever had. I enjoyed her stay with us so much that I had to get a horse and buggy and take her home—while Kurg took our kindred. When I reluctantly left Sal, we had decided to write to each other. We had not corresponded but a short while before she learned of my feeble "health"—and we quit and I had a bad "attack".

Rev. Squash lived two years at Rocque and was popular. He had the respect and esteem of the best element, but the deportment of Kurg, Os and myself was a barrier to his influence and caused his removal. A preacher's family can undo the good work of the

preacher or add to it, as the behavior of the children determine. I mention these regrettable facts to show that much responsibility rests upon the entire family of a preacher. I cannot make any apology for the indiscretion of us boys. We did not intentionally wish to damage father in his work. It is humiliating to confess. Kurg and myself became extremely wicked. Kurg was secret in his sins and I was open, and fearless. I was an avowed agnostic—a fool! Os was in the broad road also. Martha found a box of ammunition and Os was suspected of being the owner and was forced to surrender a partnership revolver of forty-four calibre, and burn a deck of cards.

Rev. Squash was sent up the river to the Gladigo and Pleasant Stillness Circuit. My health being really impaired I went with them—or rather I took a steamboat, and they were to come by land. I was landed, in the rain and mud at daybreak, at Gladigo—a rank stranger, sick and tired. I walked through the rain from the wharf to the town. I soon became acquainted, but I was too sick to care to know people. My folk did not come that day, as I had expected. The next day I was too ill to leave the house. The Squashes rolled in that night. There was no parsonage on the circuit and we had to rent a house. The parsonage at Rocque was furnished and we had to buy household furniture at Gladigo—but the stores did not have chairs and cooking stoves and the other articles they had we would not have. All of the freight came by the boats. The merchants were out of groceries also. We had moved, but did not own either stoves or chairs, except a rocking chair we had moved, and we had not brought any-

thing to eat except meal, sweet potatoes and some molasses. Father borrowed an oven and mother cooked on the fireplace. We either sat on the floor or stood up. On Sunday all the family except myself took dinner with a loyal church official. I was sick in bed. If ever I repented it was that day. I was sicker than my relatives knew, and there I was alone and could not help myself—if there had been anything to help myself to. I prayed. I cried. I cursed. I laughed. I grew angry. I tried to die. I got sorry. I prayed again. At last I resigned myself to my lot, with a vow to be a better boy and live a Christian life henceforth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As the Shuttle Flies.

During the time spent at Gladigo Rev. Squash's term of office was replete with labors. He never worked harder. A good deal of neglected territory was developed and his own work revived and overhauled. Fifteen consecutive weeks were spent in revival effort the first year. The most of the people were poor, but "they heard him gladly." As an instance of the esteem they held for him, I will give an incident that occurred one evening in a revival at one of his backwood appointments. They had had a gracious service and a great victory and had rejoiced until all were very tired. Just as the preacher was to close an old man said, "Don't close yet. I want to lay down flat of my back on this straw and hear that good man pray once more," and he stretched himself in the straw, and father offered a prayer. Father was gifted in prayer.

While holding that revival a rattlesnake bit our one-eyed horse—"Old Bill"—and the poor brute was brought home, with his head swollen the size of a salt barrel. In a few days, after intense suffering, he departed this life. I am sure tears were in more than one member of the family's eyes. It was like one of us dead. We Squashes are attached to every dumb brute on the place. Father announced from the pulpit: "My horse is dead. Your old snake bit him," and the people purchased a horse and gave it to him. Poor horse! Peace to his ashes!

Kurg left home and went to Henry Clay, where he secured employment. I held my office at Rocque, and hired a substitute to do the work for me, while I managed a drug store, ran a newspaper, and studied and practiced medicine. My health was still bad, but I had improved in morals a good deal. To tell the truth I had been fighting a call to the ministry. I knew that if I yielded to impressions and did any church work, the harness would be put on me in a short time and I would have to preach. I did not want to be a preacher. I would rather work than "bawl". I vacillated between duty and desire, first resolving to preach and then to be a doctor. I would try to be good for a while, but when I was called upon to do too much religious work, I would plunge into dissipation and quit. Finally I became desperate and resolved not to be a preacher and I "did evil before the Lord all the days" of my residence at Gladigo. My health grew worse all the time. Malinda Squash was taken critically ill, while we were at Gladigo, and for several days her life hung in the balance. All the family were in despair of her recovery. The best medical attention possible was secured but they could not offer any hope. Father agonized in prayer night and day, walking up and down the gravel walk from the gate to the house.

After weary watching the spark of life flickered, rallied—and she recovered. This was the first and last serious illness we had in our family up to the present time. The Squashes are a hardy set. A few months afterward a telegram to father came. It read: "Your father is dead." Father made the long trip to Squashville and buried his father. Before a year

had passed a dispatch was received, stating that grand mother Squash was not expected to live and for father to come at once. Father was always devoted to his mother and he made all haste to reach her side. She was at the home of a married daughter at Henry Clay. Father arrived in time to see his mother and receive her parting blessing.

“Son, I gave you to the Lord, and I am glad that He has used you. Go and hold out faithful and secure the crown of righteousness. Meet me in heaven and bring all the rest of the family. Tell your wife and children to live right and meet me too,” said the dying mother as she held her feeble, withered hands upon his head.

She died and was buried at Squashville by the side of her husband. It rained so much that father was the only one who could go with the hearse on the long journey from Henry Clay to Squashville. He and the driver drove all night and part of the next day.

One night about this time we could not find Os. A neighbor's boy was absent also. We could glean no tidings of the boys. I conjectured that they had gone to Rocque to see the races and a telephone message to Rocque confirmed the belief. But how had they gotten there, puzzled us. They had no money. They had walked! I had to go to Rocque and wanted to see the races, so I followed them—but I did not walk. I found the boys, footsore and miserable. They were from home, but wanting to go home, but fearing to go. They were not enjoying themselves. I gave them some money, but I could not take them home or console them with hope. They were anxious to know the fate that awaited them. I told them all I knew was

that they would have to walk home and would learn the rest themselves when they got there. The boys reflected long and seriously over the step, but finally saw that "steps" were best—so they made their way home. The distance was thirty miles and the road seemed twice as long coming back as it had seemed in going. There was no fatted calf killed on the prodigal's return, but it came very near being a prodigal. Os cannot be run off since that time. Of course Uncle Peter made us a visit. He came alone. We children did our best to furnish him a good time. He had to see and know everything as usual. He was well pleased. Caleb C. C. amused Uncle Peter greatly. The first evening after Uncle Peter came Caleb C. C. came into the room, holding a yellow, sore-eyed kitten by one ear, with one hand and a hunk of bread and meat with the other.

"Where heve ye bin?" asked Uncle Peter.

"A huntin'," said the child between bites.

"Ketch enything?"

"Nearly," laconically came the answer.

"How near?"

"Stepped on a rabbit."

"Whare at—a foot?"

"Yep."

"Left foot?"

"Yep."

"Left-hand hind foot?"

"Yep."

"Right toe on the left-hand hind foot?"

"Yep."

And the young Squash took the kitten by both ears and began to twist them. We older boys called treat-

ing a cat that way “spinning wool rolls”—the noise sounds very much like an old spinning wheel. Always after that, as long as Uncle Peter tarried with us, he would call Caleb C. C. and ask him to play a tune on his cat for him.

Miss Flint and I would write a while and then quit, and begin it all over again. A courtship loses the most of its fascination when conducted by correspondence. Go to see the girl and talk to her. I always could write my heart better than I could speak it. When writing, two are apt to misunderstand each other. I got tired of writing, so I went to see her. When a man is sincere it is hard to talk love. I drew my chair close to Sal—and sat as silent as an oyster for an hour. I resolved “to do or die.” I meant business. I had told her I loved her many times, but I was not meaning it. But my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth and I never was so scared. After a struggle I blurted out: “Sal, I love you.”

She said: “You do not!”

“Yes, I do, and I want you to marry me if you can love me,” and I threw my arms about her and kissed her rosebud mouth before she could divine my intentions. She struggled to free herself from my embrace, but I held her and poured every sweet word I could think of into her ear. She asked me to release her. I refused unless she would kiss me and tell me she loved me. She said that she would not do it. She did not love me and never would, and for me to let her aloose, or she would call her father. I plead and argued, and she burst into tears. I let her aloose then, for I did not know what to do with her, and began making overtures of pardon. She was indeed

angry, but after much persuasion she relented and forgave me. I made another trip to see her and I made the speech of my life. She told me when I pressed her for an answer that sometimes she thought she loved me and again she thought she did not, but that if I would leave it to fate for three months, she would give me a final answer—if she thought she loved me at that time she would marry me. I did not want to wait, but I had to.

We lived at Gladigo two years. The next move we made was the longest we had made. It was 175 miles,—clear across the state. We shipped our household goods by rail and we came by land. We were on the road one week. We took our time—and had a pleasant time, as we had relatives on the route, and we stopped and visited them. The roads were fine, the weather superb, and the people hospitable. We arrived safely at Shallot, our new home, without anything occurring out of the ordinary.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Two Soldiers.

Owing to the valitudinarian state of my health I resigned my various positions and embarked with my parents for Shallot. I grew steadily worse. I felt that it was the hand of the Lord upon me. I knew my frailty and my unworthiness. I offered every excuse man could make. I was willing to do any substitute work possible—but I found no relief. It seemed that I would die if I did not heed. I remained still in the garden of Gethsemane.

Kurg came home to spend Yuletide and stayed several weeks with us. He left us and in a few days he notified us that he had joined the regular army. He was a fine looking man—a stalwart figure, with a military bearing—at this time. Kurg's reports of army life fired Os's heart with patriotism and he wanted to go to the defense of his country. It was with difficulty that we forestalled him from running away.

My unrest and perturbed feelings became only more acute and heavy and at last I cried out: "Not my will but Thy will be done, let this cup pass from me." I began to do all church work required of me. I lead prayer meetings, taught a class in Sunday school, and did my duty the best I could in every way. Father was gratified at the step I had taken and he was anxious for me to make my maiden effort before the Tempter could attack me. So accordingly he persuaded me to go to his farthest appointment. At

the forenoon appointment, after the sermon, I was called upon to lead in prayer. I looked around and called upon an old man to pray, which he did. On the way to where I was to conduct the services in the afternoon, father asked me if I was going to rat on him like I had that forenoon. I told him no. There was a large crowd present and my heart failed me—but I could not retreat. Father was already explaining to the congregation that they would get to hear a young gun fire his first shot. My mind was surging and the people floated before my eyes. I did not know even where I was, I was so terrified. I felt like “Sheepkiller” did one day. We boys were in bathing and he could not swim. Seeing the rest of us plunge boldly into the water and gracefully swim across the stream, he foolishly jumped in, opened his mouth, swallowed all the water he could, and sank. Two or three of us went to his rescue and grabbed him by the hair of the head as he went under for the last time, and dragged him ashore. He was as limber as a dishrag and it took some time to resuscitate him. When he could speak he said: “I lost my breath, but I did not lose my knowin’.”

I remember hearing father saying: “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,” and sat down and motioned to me to begin. I regained my equilibrium to some extent while I opened the services, but I felt a premonition of failing. I began my introductory remarks by explaining that I was there because I had promised father and I did not want to break my word, “I am sorry to disappoint such a nice crowd,” I continued, “for I am sure you came to hear a sermon instead of a first effort. How

ever I shall try to do my best and I want your prayers and attention instead of a critic's eye and ear. Do not expect to hear a report from a Mauser, Krag-Jorgenson, Howitzer, or Maxim, but a pop-gun. Of course I intend some day to eclipse my father, who considers (and is considered by some) himself to be heavy artillery. I am just the son of a-a-a—" The congregation was smiling. I was trying to say that I was the son of a preacher and ought not to be expected to excel him the first trial. Father spake out, "You are just a son of a gun." The crowd laughed outright—and I was embarrassed. I became composed and talked on Christian character for half an hour. I am still known as the "son-of-a-gun" preacher in that section.

CHAPTER XXV.

A Model School.

In the summer I went to another state and stood a state examination for a teacher's certificate. I secured it and a school in a remote district or beat, about five miles from home, as we lived near the state line. I went from home and rode horseback — and had six dilapidated gates to open. I had never been where I was to teach and I was greatly disappointed the first day. Although I received the same salary as the other teachers in the district, I had no school house. I taught in an old vacant house, the backbone of which was broken and the weather boards off in several places and the chimney was half torn down. There was not a pane of glass in the windows and never had been. The windows were porthole arrangements. The roof leaked—I found this out the first time it rained. There were neither blackboards nor seats. I had only four pupils the first day, seven the next, four the next, six the next and four the other two days the first week, so seating them was no serious undertaking. As the studies of the pupils throughout the school were not advanced enough to require a blackboard, we had to buy no chalk. The patrons of the school came and put some planks criss-cross on blocks of wood and made benches or rather places to sit, in one corner of the building. There were no backs to the improvised benches and there could be no regular places assigned the pupils. A family near-by fur-

nished a chair for the teacher, a sheep-bell, a tin bucket and a home-made broom for the school. The establishment boasted of a dark attic, with rickety steps leading thereto, a side room, and the school room. In less than three weeks the enrollment was 47, of all sizes and kinds—except colored children. There were boys larger than myself and some so small that they cried all the time. All of them were ragged and mean and dirty-faced. Some had the itch and some were lousy, and all wore a lump of asafoetida around their necks (a talisman or amulet against evil spirits, I suppose) and their toes in slings. Most of the parents sent me word not to spare the rod, that if I did they would think that I was leaving out the most important “branch” of the curriculum. There were scarcely any two books alike, and I had to have as many classes as kinds of books. I never saw such an assortment. Some of the books were so ancient as to be beyond my acquaintance and a few were modern. Many had no books and only brought their dinner to school and one boy who had never gone to school brought a second reader. The course of study ranged from fourth reader and speller downward to zero. There never was a pedagogue, I will venture to assert, who had more to contend with than myself. Hardly any of the pupils came regularly and none of the boys were comparatively good. When it rained and the wind blew the house stood, for it was built upon a rock—but I had to let the pupils either go home or go to a large barn hard by. There was really only one small spot that kept dry and the teacher took it. I had to rise so early that sometimes I was a little late and had no time to eat breakfast—I ate my dinner before I got

to school. The pupils were kind and they gave me fruit. One day I took home twenty-three pomegranates, six cymlins and a fine peach, a watermelon, and a sackful of roasting ears. The boys used tobacco, and a sturdy youth of six did not hesitate to ask the teacher "for a chaw of thet sweet 'backer'". Often the teacher's tobacco gave out and he asked the boys for tobacco, but the home-grown weed was almost too stout to be endured. Teacher and pupils chewed during "books" if they wanted to. As there were plenty of cracks in the floor and walls the spittle did not bother. I did not want to whip anyone and I put long switches over the mantel to be a warning. The boys forced me to use them. I chastised lightly at first, but I soon learned that they bragged about it, and I got as severe or more so than they expected—which all seemed to enjoy except the ragamuffins who received it. My duties being many and onerous often I did not have time to give "a guilty wretch" his just deserts and I had to resort to other means of punishment to expedite business or give wholesale castigation, which sometimes fell upon innocent parties as I would take a bench at a time. I put boys to stand upon one foot or to sit upon the floor with outstretched legs. Again, I would put a boy up in the attic with the darkness, gloom, bugs and rats. I am proud to say that I never had to reprove the girls. One day I put a tatterdemalion in the attic and forgot him and kept him there nearly all day. He was nearsighted; I saw him holding a book over his face while reciting and I thought that he was laughing. I told him to take the book away from his face, but he put it back every time to keep up with the lesson. I grew impatient at

his disobedience and put him in the attic. When I learned my error I apologized and treated him better than he deserved for a month. But he got obstreperous and I flaggelated him until he remembers me I have no doubt until this good day. I joined the games and we had jolly times. They soon learned that if they behaved and had good lessons that I would indulge them in longer play times. I gave them the benefit of what I knew by telling them little bits of history, geography, and other things, and asking them local questions. A deep interest was made and many began to thirst and hunger for knowledge. Who knows but that those lessons were stepping stones to a brilliant career. One day a little fellow came in looking like a drowned rat. I saw him shivering and I approached him. He lisped and he did not want to tell me the trouble. I coaxed and threatened and he said: "The bhoys thed they whould ghive me a dhime if Hi whould whade the chreek and Hi dhid."

"Give me the dime," I said authoritatively.

"Hi'll not do hit. Hi phear Hi'll swallow hit fhirst," and he put the coin into his mouth. I quit him, after lecturing him until the tears dampened his collar. I punished the boys who had inveigled him into the scrape.

Sometimes at noon I would lay beneath the shade of a tall elm and go to sleep while the pupils wandered in play. Very often when I awoke there was not a child within calling distance and it was half past two o'clock. I would ring the sheep bell or halloo, and if they came not I would catch my horse and hunt them. The school was of three months dura-

tion and its close was like its beginning—tapering. A few weeks before the term was out fodder pulling and cotton picking depleted the ranks to a corporal's guard—and they were victims of agues. I have seen three or four at a time with chattering teeth and burning brows, shake my little dwelling almost from its foundations. The last day of school there were eight pupils. I carried them two boxes of stick candy and bade them help themselves. It was a treat to both of us—for I enjoyed seeing the children eat the candy. I told them to tear the house down that day—and it came very near being done. I will never forget that school, although I have never been back there and I do not know how my pupils have turned out. Wherever they may be I remember them and say God bless them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Raven's Croak.

Fate is fickle. She is apt to deceive you. You are given a serpent instead of a fish more often than you get what you desire. She is unreliable. Sallie Flint at the expiration of three months wanted three months more. I took it that she was in love with me and I granted her request. I went to see her many times during the probation. I am confident that she loved me, but her folk objected to me so strenuously and my health was so poor, she was forced to refuse me. Those short months were blissful. Yet we did not always agree. When the allotted time had passed to the pales of age I commanded her to answer—and she answered. She began prefacing her reply with regrets and I read but a line or two before I knew my doom—and threw the letter aside. I afterwards perused its contents. It was a sensible, friendly, tender epistle. Fate decreed that Sallie Flint and myself should go separate paths. I fell into reveries by day and dreams by night. I worried and pined until I became unwell. Often I sat with her photograph in view and looked at her imaged face and wished I was with her. The last time I saw her she was so sad and confused that I felt that I was the cause of it. I could not keep thoughts of death from stealing into my mind. Death! That king of terrors, who separates us forever in human life from our loved ones, who gives the aching brow and troubled heart relief and repose. In my sorrow I dreamed that death had robbed me of my

treasure; that he had snapped the brittle thread of life and released the beautiful soul of her to return to her Maker, and left me alone—alone and sad! I wanted to die too, to join in paradise that dearest heart and live eternally, two loving hearts. Merciful God! I had longed and prayed that some heaven on earth would be mine, that her and my destinies would be united. Thou black-visaged monster! why did thy icy fingers clutch her soft, tender throat! Stay! I will not give her to you. Stand back, I say, and let her alone! Thou art an awful, powerful black-souled demon, but I dread thee not. I fear thee not. Do not touch her. She is mine. Worms and corruption shall not lay hands on her. She is too pure. I challenge you by the eternal love of my heart to dare approach her. God gave her to me. The grave, cold, clammy sod, that dark, frightful, gloomy receptacle of the dead—mother earth—for her, to embrace her silent form! No! No! My arms shall clasp her to my breast and there shall her fair head rest. I shall kiss her sweet lips, her kind eyes, her pure brow, and her dear face—not you! She shall be warm flesh, living and loving, for she is not yours! My bride-elect was not dead. It was but a dream. But she was lost to me. My mind was filled with miserable thoughts. My heart was full of unwritten letters of love. All was in the past. Ah, the past! It loomed up in memory like a station-house, all the trains of the past rolled by and I sat and viewed them. Some were freighted with cares. Others with troubles. Some had gleeful childhood's days of mirth and pleasure, but nearly all had thoughts of pain and torture. I never was quite free of them. It takes the black coal

and fire to produce the energy to carry the train. And one train especially attracted my attention. It was the past few months, with all its dreams and hopes and changes. Part of it was the happiest portion of my life. I spent it with her. Time was fleet. But that train was wrecked. From a high precipice it fell—and it was at the station the last time, ruined and wrecked. It was running smoothly. The engineer hoped to carry it safely and he stood bravely at his post. It traveled through a beautiful country—through the land of love and dreams. It was a bright day. Flowers were on every hand. The sky was blue. The air was pure. It glided over that trestle and an unsafe bridge or two. Then darkness and curves and tunnels. Now and then a stretch of beautiful landscape—of hope and dreams of happiness. The engineer's heart hoped against hope. Ahead was a fearful trestle over a yawning abyss. Could he safely cross? He raised his heart in prayer and put his hand trustingly upon the throttle. On, on the engine rushed. The worst was passed. Would he cross? Thank God, he had—no! No—a derailed track plunged the faithful iron horse into destruction and demolished all the cars and mangled the passengers. And at the union depot the train now stands, never again to run a trip. Its engine is panting, trembling, bruised, and scarred. Its coaches are battered, twisted, and disabled. Some of them are beyond recognition—a tangled mass of wheels, rods, and wood work. The future looked dark and stormy. The lights put out were extinguished by the wind. The dove sent forth returned without an olive leaf. The elements were too terrible for it to live outside. The

heavens were covered with inky darkness—a veritable Erebus. The sun and moon were hidden and not a single star shed its ray above the horizon bar. My frail barque was at sea without a rudder. The thunder rolled. The fierce flashes of lightning gleamed in vengeance. The waves tossed high and wild. I was hurled madly in the maelstrom. Would I find the strong current and Providence guide me to the haven of rest? Or would I go down into the murky waters and be shattered? It was too late. No hope! But somewhere out in space God would stretch forth His hand and say, “peace be still.” After awhile the shipwrecked servant hopes to rest in His bosom. All trials, sorrows, tribulations, troubles, pain, woe and misery will end—will end in death, yes, sweet relief. No more disappointments, unhappiness, shadows. All light—radiant, glorious light! There—pure and free and happy! Angel’s songs the ear to greet! Saints’ praise to attend the heart! Hosannas to burst forth in loud acclaim! The King and Lord to meet! Was it fate that decreed such suffering? I know not.

Gradually the memory and love of Sallie Flint passed away as earth’s blooming flowers. Other attractions began tugging at my heartstrings. However, I shall not insert any more of my experience with the lovely and fair, in this history. Perhaps, I have said too much already. Yet I may not have said enough. There seems to be an unseen hand which shapes our destinies. Whether it is fate or luck I know not. Miss Flint left her decision in the hands of fate—and fate said “no more!” I suppose it was best—anyway I accepted her answer as final. There has not appeared a star of hope in the sky of life,

from her since. I took my medicine like a good Indian. When a boy I had to take many a dose of castor oil or sulphur that tasted worse than this, but it did not last as long. I have looked over the past, it is true, and thought what it would have been had her answer been "yes" instead of "no". I have received many "noes" since then and a "yes" or two, but I remain in the "wanting" column and am still looking for the right girl. As Uncle Peter says in giving his religious experience, "Ef I don't git thare at the eleventh hour I hope I'll git thare the twelfth. Ef I don't git thare at all it won't be my fault."

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Pursuit of Happiness.

Throughout my life I have had a strange aptitude for "catching" things or it seems that I inevitably am unfortunate in contracting them. I have contracted everything almost from debt to the seven-year itch and sometime the contagion has been duplicated and tripled, especially in the first and last named. I have had the whooping cough, measles, rheumatism, gout, agues, and infectious diseases *ad infinitum*. The disease commonly known as love played havoc with me. It seems that I always was extremely susceptible to its ravages. But it and *sarcoptes scabiei* made interesting and unexplainable pleasure with a Shoelish tinge. The inextricable meshes of Cupid's net with 10,000 additional necessary and incidental effects makes a fellow very sick. Happiness has been my zealous quest since I knew life. In boyhood's flaunting days I unconsciously sought its end. I chased the elusive butterfly, angled for the wary trout in the mountain streams, covertly took watermelons, tied tin cans to dog's tails, played truant at home and school, and ate green apples—but happiness was always just beyond, in the to-morrow (and the morrow generally brought forth sundry pains, penalties for hygienic, civil, parental and general disobedience). I redoubled my energies and plied my time to the search until sick or weary I digressed until recuperated—to begin again. In youth I sought it, strove for it, yearned for it—it was still ahead. I composed maudlin ditties for silly

school girls, whispered sweet lies into attentive ears, won my "puppy love," but it was not there. Where does happiness dwell? In earth, in sky, in heaven, in hell? Not in earth—oh, no! It is naught there but a fleeting shadow, a transient dream, a silver echo, a kiss wafted from an houri's finger tips, a breath of a water nymph, a bud but not a flower, a smile not a kiss, a "sweet to the taste and bitter to the stomach." Not in sky for it is variable, vacillating, evanescent. We look to it with hope, but the showers of blessings ne'er fall. Its charming notes allure us. Its exquisite perfume deceives us. Its radiant, scintillating sheen blinds us. Its coquetish smile ensnares us. In heaven? Ah! I am not there. Oh, happiness here! In hell? In Tophet, where legion devils, fiends incarnate, dwell! Impossible! But where? Ah, where! To be in love madly, soulfully, with no prospects of reciprocation, or, if that, no chance to plight your troth at the hymeneal altar, because of a lack of competence or whatever cause is a lamentable predicament. Love ever seemed to be the limit, the end of my rainbow-happiness. In its bourne was my surcease of aching heart. Perhaps it is! Love is blissful—and miserable. It is the acme of this life's component pleasures. O, Love intoxicant! It causes you to forget cares, obstacles, sorrows, friend, kin—all! But how like Bourbon rye! It is a delight to quaff the pleasantly flavored beverage. What a titillation to the palate! What a thrill and ecstasy to the being! Its soothing influence renders us unconsciously rapturous, exhilarated. The after effects—how like love! Seasickness is mockery in comparison. The epigastric region becomes a tumultuous, rebelling centre. The world gyrates and the

heavens whirl. Our feet pass from out under us and we lie—a remnant of sturdy manhood, in desuetude, ready to deliver soul and body to the sovereign of the infernal domain! Queasy, disgusted, nauseated, weak, mean we are! Oh, like love, I say! Full of hope, life, ambition, expectant happiness! Glad hearts and willing hands—future life a path of roses, a happy home and a lovely family. We hold the tender hands, look into the dear eyes, kiss the sweet lips, sit by the side of the adorable creature, and contemplate the happy days to come—they come not often, alas! (or, perhaps, best). We linger in jubilant thought and imagination. Our sun rises brightly—no cloud obstructs the horizon. The whole world is love. The tide turns. There is many a slip betwixt cup and lip. Expectation becomes anxiety; hope, despair. The signs are first one way and then the other. You cannot tell which way your boat is veering. You are drifting upon the billows. Now, in the breakers. Then, near the treacherous shoals. Now, upon the rocks. Then, under the waves. You are in love—you are in the lake of brimstone and sulphur. You are happy but miserable. With the addition of force of circumstances—irascible parents, adverse fortune and dire handicaps against you—you will be stranded upon the beach. Life will become ignoble, useless, undesired, if there is no aim. We must have a buoy. We must have help. We need to be directed, guarded, coaxed, petted. We like the subtle atmosphere of where there is a woman. Without love men degenerate. We think less of others. We become bestial. But would you, an honest man, supposing you were not competent to start married life as you

should or would like, wish to ask a woman to share starvation or at least a state of abject penury or hard livelihood? No. You are too honest to propose just to give her a matrimonial chance. You say take a better chance. Some of the greatest successes began without much of a start. We cannot tell the caprices of fortune. The defeat of to-day is the victory of to-morrow and the smiles of to-day are the groans of to-morrow. You love. Time drags on. The problem remains unsolved. You still love and wait. Why does not Cupid solve his own problems? Why does he affect and not effect? Why does he impart a cruel flame and add fuel instead of satiation? Sometimes when one wins his love—after the nuptials are tied—there is an aftermath which furnishes one with a possession of an area of sulphurous climate and country—all his own! Who can tell? Who knows? We cannot determine our own happiness and our own destiny, when it is a personal satisfaction we seek and fond dreams we would have come to pass.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Glass We See Through.

There has flown across memory quite a number of girls and women I have known in the past since I began this history. The remembrance of some is pleasant, of others sad, of a few bitter hatred. I have been as a woman to know woman, to love her. I have been a man to be her slave, obey the veriest sway of her sceptre. When I ceased to be as a woman she became not as she is and while I was as a woman she became not as she was. While I was her slave she was a proud mistress, who domineers and who did not return affection. Women—they held my heart, but they crushed it. They lead me, but it was driving me as the devil cunningly leads his deluded victims. I did to their pleasure through love. They enjoyed themselves even as they did the work of a horse with no other feeling than, “Poor, good horse!” I loved them even as the dog loves his master, and eats of the crumbs from the table, where his master eats of the fatness of the land. I loved and admired them as the poor brute that feels the caressing of an unsympathetic hand. Their caresses are but playings of pettings, cajoling me to obedience to inane desires and sweet bits of folly and coaxing to their content, which gratified, surfeits my reward. I surely have been foolish or else deluded, yet have I not trodden the path of all men! What has been my recompense? Where is the benison? What has been the redoundment of their spoiled sovereignty? When

shall my eager desires and flaming void of heart have a satiation and be an entity? Have I not been a horse to the rider and a beast at the mill, a bestial prisoner to the ream, and a drawer of water at the well and a hewer of wood, to the fair sex? The prize has been a surprise, longing eyes are just longing still. The shining skies have lost their flecks of blue and the stars their sheen of effulgence, and the heart its throbbing of expectancy and ecstasy! I gave them my best—my admiration and my love, my power, my strength, my chattels and my increase. I nursed their vanity and cradled their pride. They crooned at my cupidity and cooed at my credulity. They gave me smiles—aye, smiles as false as they were fatal; as subtle as they were impotent. Smiles of a serpent—flits of a pleased soul's pompacity. They gave me words, sugar-coated draughts, as soft as their hands—as valueless—as deceitful as the ides of March. They gave me their jewelled hands to clasp, to hold, to press—but had they not been pressed by others and by bands of gold, and had I not have pressed my own for the aught I received! They gave me their cheeks to fondle and coddle over and prate maudlin, mawkish sentiment about. But what did I gain! A transient pastime and a fleeting joy. I kissed them, but had not the winds done the same! They loaned me their lips, but they gave me not their self, their soul, their love, their value, that which I sought and coveted and wished in exchange for myself. I had bartered my love and sold my manhood's flower for a moment's passion—I had nothing! Some gave me nothing—not even a “brush of a bee's wing” or a sparkling dewdrop from their rosy lips. Not

even that which they could not miss for the abundance in store—not a single clasp, embrace, or return heart-beat. For these I toiled on, redoubled my labors and increased my fidelity and courtesy, thinking the greater their worth and firmer their estimate. I did not win. I stood beneath the vernal bowers of Edenland and saw the first pair. There stood man in all his pristine majesty and constancy, his fidelity and his dignity. There stood woman, ensnaring, cunning, tempting, holding the forbidden fruit in her hands, offering it to man. Succumbing to her wiles and enchantments, her pleadings and her entreaties, I saw man partake—and poor, weak man! No—he suffered the curse because his great love could not bear to see her doomed alone, and it lead him to die with her—even in death he sacrificed upon the altar of love his life to abide by her in weal or woe. I stood upon the dizzy heights of Mt. Ararat and viewed the arid plains below. Again were man and woman. She said go and he went; she said come and he came.

I stood upon the field of a carnage and saw a thousand mangled limbs quivering in their great agony—bloody stubs of arms and legs and headless trunks! Blood and gore ran in crimson streamlets and soaked the ground. Wreck and ruin, fire, smoke, bursting shrapnel and flying grape, everywhere. Groans, shrieks, anguish, pain, torture, curses, shouts, commands, regrets, prayers and farewells above and commingled with the din and turmoil of the bitter, angered fray. Bullets, blood, destruction, hell, fill the air. The clarion note and bugle blast pierce the thunder-laden atmosphere, call men on to duty and to death, stimulating and inspiring. I saw brave men

fall and brave men march on, facing the jaws of death and hand to hand bearding the enemy in the conflict. Courage and bravery were in demand and the gallant few reserved their intrepidity. A hero fell, pierced through the heart by a cruel bullet. In his last gasp he pressed to his colorless lips the portrait of a woman—his lover. Even in death he bowed at her shrine and paid her abeyance. In a brilliantly lighted room, the self-same hour I saw the woman, whose image the dying soldier kissed, plight her troth to another.

I saw a weakling to woman's charms, a manly form, skulk away from the battlefield, where his presence was needed and his country called, to meet a woman—his lover. He left behind his honor and courage, to meet her—the woman who held him at her command. I saw her perfidy, how she betrayed him—gave him into the hands of his enemies. Are all women false? Are all deceitful? God forbid and save us! Are women angels? Is any man worthy of one? No. Angels have not faults and heartless hearts. Woman, in thy domain have they no standard of the heart? Is the steed riderless, to run rampant, to have liberty at will? Is there no decree to bind one to another in more than promise? One moment thou art a noble, lovable sovereign, and I, your humble subject, kneel a happy man at your feet. Then, thou frownest and I shrink in despair. Forlorn and desolate I am. Then morbid thoughts, rancor of desperation, pangs of heart drive me mad. Rational I am—not mad! Sane—not frenzied! Grieved and hurt—not crazed! I turn—I change to have my revenge but I canst not, durst not. Thy beauty and thy eyes, thy face and

thy charms forbid. I admire and admiration is stronger than any hatred my heart couldst foster. My solace hast been my tears, but the fountain is dry! I weep not again or find relief in tearless sobs. The heart aches and tires. Wouldst I be a man to resist thy attraction. Yet I love to no benefit. I love thee but I say—I wish I did not.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Away from Home.

I was recommended by the district conference which gave me license, for admission on trial into the Jerusalem annual conference. At the annual session I passed an approved examination and was appointed to a mission work, over a hundred miles from home. The work was a new one, formed of churches from two charges, and I followed two veteran circuit riders. Having been a minister's son and acquainted with the work for fifteen years, I knew something of a preacher's life, but actual contact with the duties soon taught me that I had viewed the land from the mountain top.

Leaving home and mother was one of the hardest trials of my life. Tears streamed from all of our eyes. I called the family together and had a word of prayer and I silently started on my journey. I went in a buggy and stopped with preachers on the way. Every one was kind and encouraging toward me. When I was fifteen miles of my destination my horse became lame. I drove to a blacksmith's shop and asked the price of a horse shoe. It was a quarter of a dollar—the exact amount of my money. I asked the smith if he could tack on an old shoe for less. He said, yes. He asked me then if I was not a preacher and if I had not attended the conference held the week before. I answered in the affirmative. He said: “I remember seeing you, and, brother, let me give you a new shoe.” He invited me home with him, but I thanked him and

drove on. I had spent all my money for a buggy, clothing, books, and expenses of my trip—so I arrived on my work with no money. My trials and struggles were similar to those of my father, which I have already enumerated. The people of the charge I served were my friends in the main and they gave me a sincere welcome and accorded me kindness and cordiality so long as I remained with them. I had never been away from home—and now I had no home. The home of others was my home. I visited but the people kept me up too late of nights. It was only one night with them, but every night with me. I decided to board, but boarding did not suit me. I never longed for home so much as I did the first few weeks of my pastorate—no place truly on earth was so sweet to me! It seemed that I would die if I remained away from home longer. Satan tempted me as no one can imagine. I felt unequal for the work and unfit to be a “chosen vessel.” If I had not gotten into the work right away I would have yielded. I entered upon the discharge of my duties with a zest born of desperation. I visited the homes of the lowly who had not been visited in years by a preacher. I went to see the sick and sat up with the dead, preached funerals, and sought the lost and fallen during the week and preached twice each Sunday. The good housewives will make extra preparations when a preacher is around, and if he will not eat some of all they cook, they will think that he does not appreciate their hospitality. I ate often when I did not care to and more than I wished. I was overwhelmed with invitations and I was pressed for time to get around. I believe that every tribulation in the land was poured into my

ears. I found myself the confidante of factions. I was advised by both sides. Nearly every one wanted to tell me what to do and how to do it. And children! I thought I knew how to hold my own with them. I dearly like children when they are nice and neat—but deliver me! I had to quit wearing my best clothes to keep the children from spoiling them. They were too affectionate. One day I stopped at a home where there were two small children. I gave them an apple apiece. They ate them and asked for more. I gave them a couple. They wanted more. I evaded their questions, but presently I felt a hand in my pocket. I said nothing. The other child cried and I gave it an apple. The rogue asked for one and I refused. He struck me with a stick. His mother laughed at him. The other slipped behind me and hit me in the back. I slapped him and the mother became angry. I had a supply of nice apples some one had given me to take home—but I never had any when I came home. On that work the most of the children were unclean and too friendly. If I noticed one the least (and a preacher has to notice the children) he was all over me and in every pocket. Sometimes they would be eating bread and molasses. They asked me thousands of questions. And dogs! I got acquainted with several hundred of all degrees—mongrel, whelp, curs, hounds, mastiffs, bull dogs. The dogs were too friendly also—but there were exceptions. Some were very savage. No one has any idea of the number and kind of dogs until he begins to visit house to house in a community. I soon learned to judge the people by their dogs. If a dog met me at the gate and began to fawn and play I knew child-

ren were at that home and that denoted welcome. If the dog was shy and abashed and slunk from me, it was evidence that an old maid was on the place. I had not been a pastor over three months before my health broke down and I was forced to quit. Of myself I will not speak further. So, good-bye—Joab Squash.

CHAPTER XXX.

Sequelae.

Rev. Squash was at Shallot two years and moved from that place to the Cowslip Circuit. This is all I intend telling of him and his career. All of his appointments and disappointments so far has been a mission and circuits. He dreams of being a presiding elder in time—but I doubt whether he will ever roll that high or not. Of the duties of a station preacher, a presiding elder or a bishop I know nothing, except what I have heard. I have seen a few specimens, but of their habits I am ignorant. Their work is somewhat different because the problems are different. I have presented the work of an average circuit rider. I have given enough of the career of one preacher and his family to show some views of their lives and work. Some of the scenes perhaps have never been depicted before. I suppose not a few are unacquainted with the homelife and family of preachers. The main idea I have striven to convey is how God will bless those who put their case in His hands and trust and follow Him, to do His will. Look at the impediments which confronted Rev. Squash—his humble origin, his few opportunities and advantages, his meagre circumstances, being handicapped with a family—he had been married nearly all his life—and being thirty-four years of age before he started. He never rose to prominence it is true, but God blessed him and he overcame all difficulties and did, and is doing, a great amount of good. He is still in the active work. Although

his hair is streaked with gray and is becoming thin he remains young.

Mother is still at his side—a faithful wife and help-mate. The difficult position of a preacher's wife she never tried to fill to please the people, but as she thought was her duty, and her time permitted, she did her part in the great work.

Kurg is still in the army and also in love with some girl he left behind.

Os is a grown-up young man, who shaves and spruces and goes courting.

Martha is a young lady, smiling and looking sweetly at the boys.

Malinda and Caleb C. C. are enjoying the happy days of childhood.

Uncle Peter and Aunt Jemima are spending their last days in retired contentment. The last time I heard of them Uncle Peter had purchased a fifty-cent padlock to go on the crib door—and the door was hung with leather hinges.

I have lost sight of Dooks. He is out of sight upon the ladder of fame. The last time I heard of him he had married the widow of a Methodist preacher, and had joined the blue-stockings Presbyterian Church—they pay their preachers more than the Methodist do.

“Daddy” joined the army and has disappeared from the haunts that once knew him.

“Sheepkiller” got into some mischief and left the country—a fugitive from justice.

Skinner Knott joined the army and made a fine soldier.

Gomer Squiques is at Henry Clay—still a scrub farmer.

Sallie Flint is still single. I am too. I have often wondered if fate did right about our love affair.

And I am writing the history of the Squash family—and I am going to finish it. Whether I have written a complete history or a well-written history or a satisfactory history or even a history, or not, I have written all the history I ever intend to. I have tried to do my duty as a historian and if I have failed, I have failed, and that ends it—history and all.

JOAB SQUASH, Historian.

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